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Backpacking, Ski-touring,  
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Winter (July August September) 1984, Vol 4 No 3 (Issue 13)

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28 **Croajingolong** Lazy days walking the beaches of Victoria's most eastern National Park, with *Tom Millar*

34 **Swampy Saga** Draining the southern Snowy Mountains, the Swampy Plains River is dramatic and rarely paddled; by *Andrew Barnes*

38 **Skiing the Cobberas, Alone** *John Porter* succumbs to the irresistible winter charm of these remote Victorian peaks

50 **The Best Cliff in the World?** Mt Arapiles, Mecca of Australian rockclimbing; by *Chris Baxter*

56 **Diving the Nullarbor** 'Frogman extraordinary', *Francis Le Guen*, leads a French team under an Australian desert to make the world's longest cave dive

63 **Walking Through Time** The Australian bush wins an English enthusiast; by *Sue Mathews*

3 **Editorial** What's Happening at *Wild*

5 **Wild Information**

21 **Contributors**

23 **Getting Started** Reading the Weather

44 **Folio** Antarctica's Wildlife by *Colin Monteath*

67 **Track Notes** Ski Touring on Mt Kosciusko's Main Range

75 **Reviews**

78 **Wild Gear Survey** Cross Country Skis

85 **Equipment**

91 **Wildfire** Letters to the Editor

96 **Wild Shot**

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MT EVEREST  
EXPEDITION 1984

Cover Mountain guide Jos Lang pauses amid the spectacular scenery of the Rudolf Glacier, Mt Cook National Park, New Zealand. Mt Cook is in the background. Photo Michael Bennetts. Contents Windless Bight Camp with Mt Erebus behind, Antarctica. (See Folio on page 44.) Photo Colin Monteath. \*Maximum recommended retail price only



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**Contributions**, preferably well illustrated with slides, are welcome. Guidelines for Contributions are available on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope. Submissions must be typewritten, double-spaced with wide margins, using only one side of the paper, and accompanied by an envelope and sufficient postage for their return. Names and addresses should be written on manuscripts and photos as well. While every care is taken, we accept no responsibility for material submitted. Articles represent the views of the authors, and not necessarily those of the publisher.

# Editorial

## What's Happening at *Wild*

AS WE START OUR FOURTH YEAR OF publication it seems appropriate to let you know where *Wild* is going.

With this issue our print run has reached 20,000 — that of our first issue was 8,000. To help cope with the growing work load, particularly from increased subscriptions, Christine O'Brien has recently joined us as the fourth full-time member of the *Wild* team. And we've finally had to admit that we've outgrown our existing office and are moving, three doors away, to a more spacious building.

We are very conscious of the support that you, our readers, have shown us from our earliest days. In return, we will continue our efforts to give you true value for money and the quality magazine you expect. We have no immediate plans to change *Wild* from a quarterly, so we can ensure that quality is maintained in every issue. Similarly, we do not plan to be other than a small, independent team, motivated by a desire to produce a publication we enjoy and are proud of rather than the pursuit of profit.

You will have noticed a steady growth in the size and colour content of *Wild*, and may also have been aware of an unusual, if not unique, feature among magazines — the maintenance of a strictly-enforced quota on advertising content. Some of the *Wild* contributors' rates are being increased substantially with this issue, by up to 66%. We hope to be able to avoid an increase in our cover price for at least any issue

cover-dated 1984. Similarly, the 1985 issue of our rockclimbing annual, *Rock*, will again have the same cover price as it had five years ago, despite a considerable increase in colour.

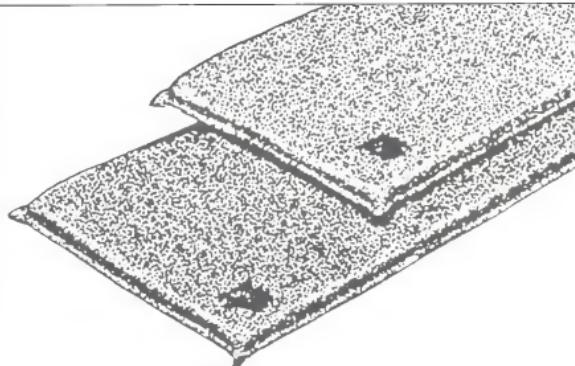
Naturally we owe a great deal to our advertisers and stockists. They have shown remarkable faith and practical support for 'the *Wild* idea' since before our first issue, a support which has intensified over recent months.

It is no secret that we actively support, in both theory and practice, the conservation of wilderness, a policy we plan to continue. Likewise, we will continue to encourage major adventures by young Australians, such as through sponsorship of the First Australian Mt Everest Expedition.

You will notice changes in *Wild*. With this issue we are devoting more space to readers' (especially beginners') needs for information and instruction, particularly regarding equipment (and how to select and use it) and wilderness skills. Our gear survey is being expanded and we will also publish more informative, practical articles, such as the one in this issue on reading the weather.

As usual, the *Wild* team is not backward in planning wilderness trips for themselves — when you read this, Tom may be ski touring with his wife in New Zealand's Southern Alps. Article research could scarcely be described as hard work for us! •

Chris Baxter  
Editor & Publisher



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# Wild Information

## Logging Threats

• **Island Troubles.** In southern Queensland the focus of conservationists' attention has been the sand mining on Moreton Island and North Stradbroke Island.

Only 40 kilometres from Brisbane, Moreton Island is of considerable recreational significance. On nearby North Stradbroke Island sand mining leases and applications cover 55% of the island. This island is further threatened by the Queensland Government's plan to link the island with the mainland and to offer Crown Land on the island for residential development.

• **Soiled.** Another Queensland conservation trouble spot has emerged with the interest of a European mining company in developing the Ben Lomond uranium mine, 60 kilometres west of Townsville.

Conservationists fear that any such activity could cause serious soil degradation of rural lands.

• **Frogmarching Orders.** Camping at one of Australia's most popular rockclimbing areas, Frog Buttress in the Mt French National Park of south-east Queensland, has been banned by the Queensland National Parks & Wildlife Service.

The reasons for the ban are obscure but it will seriously restrict access, particularly for southern visitors who frequent the area in winter. Camping is apparently available (with permission) on private property some distance from the cliff.

• **Maps.** The Queensland Department of Mapping & Survey is preparing new maps of interest to Queensland walkers.

A 1:25,000 topographic series will cover the Bowring Bay/Mt Elliot National Park area, south of Townsville, and a 1:25,000 enhanced orthophoto series will cover the Bunya Mountains National Park area north-west of Brisbane.

On the drawing board is a 1:25,000 topographic sheet which will cover the National Parks on the Springbrook Plateau, south of Brisbane.

Julian Mather

• **Get Planting.** The world's declining population of trees is an issue that concerns many people.

A Brisbane-based group called 'Trees A Million More in Eighty Four' has been formed to combat the clearing of forests by planting more trees. The target set for 1984 is one million trees.

As well as encouraging people to plant trees, it seeks people to promote a new national effort, and local co-ordinators to record the plantings in the district or state.

Interested persons should contact 'Trees A Million More in Eighty Four, c/o Relaxation



Centre, Corner Brookes and Wickham Streets, Fortitude Valley, Queensland 4006.

JM

• **National Parks.** The Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia (GPO Box 3428, Sydney, NSW 2001) has published figures (as at the end of 1983) showing the percentage of each State which is proclaimed as a National Park, nature reserve or a similarly 'protected' area: Tasmania 10.04%, Australian Capital Territory 4.05%, South Australia 3.98%, Northern Territory 3.89%, New South Wales 2.59%, Western Australia 1.78%, Victoria 1.28% and Queensland 1.26%.

The Society says that 'The usual internationally accepted figure for National Park reservations is a minimum of 5%, although our Society regards 10% for coastal reserves as more satisfactory...'. (Stage II of Kakadu National Park, NT, was declared in February. It is the habitat of much birdlife and contains one of the richest single collections of aboriginal rock art.)

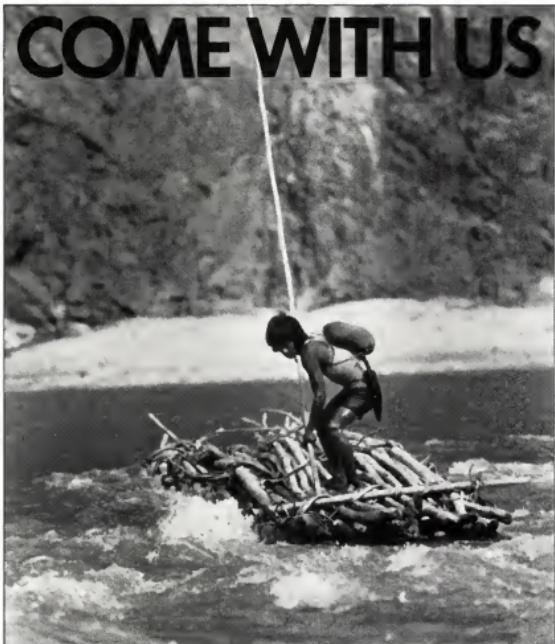
The aftermath of clear-fell logging and subsequent regeneration burning on the Eriinundra Plateau. The effects of this harsh treatment are long-lasting, if not irreparable. Em Mainka

• **More Rainforest Parks.** The recently re-elected New South Wales Labor Government has maintained its commitment to rainforest protection by reserving additional areas in National Parks. Long-awaited extensions to Werrimbe, Washpool and Barrington Tops Parks have been announced, bringing the total area added to National Parks, since Cabinet's rainforest decision in 1982, to over 118,000 hectares.

In the run-up to the election the Premier, Mr Wran, also announced that the rainforest National Parks would be as nominated for the World Heritage List. The Liberal Party, defeated in the election, had threatened that, if it was elected, it would re-open these areas for hardwood logging.

Recent scientific evidence suggests that rainforest is the oldest of all Australian flora. Australia may have been the origin of flowering

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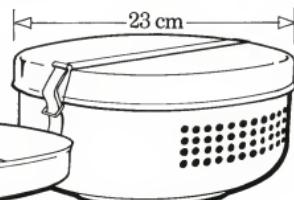
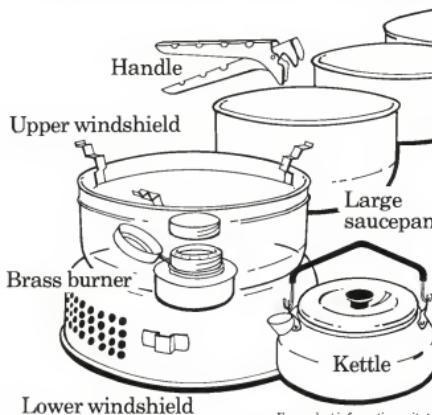
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plants. It was earlier believed that Australian rainforest originated in Asia.

Forests, particularly rainforests, are the most effective absorbers of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and the major producers of oxygen. The carbon dioxide level in the atmosphere is rising significantly.

Roger Lembit

**• Blue Mountains National Park Extensions.** Just before the New South Wales elections last March, the Premier, Mr Wran, announced extensions to the Blue Mountains National Park. Whilst Mr Wran was not specific, it is believed that vacant Crown Land near Mt Werong, on the western side of the existing Park, is involved.

This area includes Burnt Hole Creek, an interesting tributary of the Kowmung River, and the upper catchment of the Abercrombie River. Conservation groups have welcomed the additions which were part of Myles Dunphy's original proposals for a Greater Southern Blue Mountains National Park.

RL

**• Threat to Colo River.** The New South Wales Resources Commission has revealed a long-term proposal to dam most of the remaining wild and scenic rivers in the Hawkesbury Basin including the Colo. A document it has released entitled *Hawkesbury River Basin — Preliminary Water Plan* states that in order to meet Sydney's demand for water in the next century, consideration will have to be given to dams on the Colo, Macdonald, Wollondilly and Grose Rivers, as well as enlargement of Warragamba Dam which would flood the Kowmung and Coxs Rivers. The document also says that construction of these dams may have to be brought forward if demand for water increases more than anticipated.

Following the example of their counterparts in Tasmania, the engineers have apparently neglected non-structural alternatives such as improved efficiency in water use and recycling of water. It is interesting to note that Sydney already has 50 times more stored water per head than London!

Conservation groups reacted strongly to the proposals and have requested that the document be withdrawn. They suggest that these schemes need to be undermined early on to prevent detailed planning, and ask readers to write to the NSW Premier and Minister for Water Resources at Parliament House, Sydney expressing strong opposition to the proposals.

RL

**• Endangered Plants.** The World Wildlife Fund started a campaign last March to save some of the Australian plants considered to be in danger of extinction. In 200 years of white settlement, 76 species have disappeared. Of Australia's 28,000 named species of plants, more than 2,000 are considered rare or threatened although only 203 are currently on the endangered list. About 85% of the species are found only in Australia.

**• Army Base.** It is reported that the Australian Army has retained consultants to find a site for a base in New South Wales to replace areas the Army is to relinquish in the vicinity of Sydney.

Three sites are said to be under consideration: near Dubbo, near Tamworth and the third between Orange and Bathurst. As millions of hectares are thought to be under consideration, this matter is a significant one.

The third option seems to be the most favoured. It would include major wilderness areas around the Macquarie and Turon Rivers

which are popular with Sydney walkers. Another consideration is the possibility of soil erosion in tank practice areas.

**• In Quarantine.** The Quarantine Station, North Head, was incorporated in the Sydney Harbour National Park on 16 March 1984.

**• Kits.** The New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service recently produced two educational kits called 'Aboriginal Heritage' and 'After the Bushfire'. They are available for \$4.00 each from the Service's head office, Sales Centre, 189 Kent Street, Sydney, NSW 2000.

**• Paddling On.** The eighth Outward Bound Hawkesbury Canoe Classic — the overnight canoe marathon to raise money for multiple sclerosis research — is to be held on 13-14 October 1984.

Regarded as one of Australia's major marathon canoe races, the 111 kilometre event attracts entries from many parts of the country. Last year, paddlers raised more than \$50,000 for the Multiple Sclerosis Society of New South Wales and the Society will again benefit from this year's event.

Further information is available from the Race Secretary, 8 Walker Avenue, Gymea, NSW 2227, or phone (02) 699 2971.

Janet Muir

**• Derailed.** Lilyvale station, a popular gettng-off stop for bushwalkers visiting the Royal National Park south of Sydney, has been demolished. The short platform was located on a curve in the track and was apparently unsuitable for modern trains.

Close rail access to the Park can be obtained from the nearby Offord Station.

Dave Noble

**• Six Foot Track.** The Six Foot Track, now 100 years old, which runs from Katoomba to Jenolan Caves in the Blue Mountains has been remarked by the New South Wales Lands Department.

Many bushwalkers use the section of the Track from the Megalong valley to the Coxs River. As the Track passes through private farmland, the new markers will be appreciated.

DN

**• Paddy Stranded.** Paddy Pallin, probably the best-known bushwalker in New South Wales, was rescued in a bush search early this year. He was on a walk near Carrington Falls in Kangaroo Valley with two family groups when rising floodwaters cut off their path. The next day the group had not been found despite extensive searching by Paddy's son, Robert, so the Bushwalkers Federation Search and Rescue Group was called in.

The party was soon located and some of those present commented on the fact that Paddy Pallin, an octogenarian, climbed out of the gorge unassisted and hardly puffing. Paddy was the Search and Rescue Group's first Director, in the 1930s.

DN

**• Bush Rock Removal.** New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service officers near Sydney are concerned at the removal of bush rock from natural landscapes. This practice is illegal in National Parks and Crown Lands, and a licence is needed before it can be removed from private land. Bush rock is the habitat of many species of wildlife.

Rock removal has become a problem in the Colo and Macdonald wilderness areas and the Service is keen to hear reports of trucks

carrying bush rocks along the Putty Road. Phone any sightings to the Service's Wilberforce office, (045) 75 1671, giving details of time, place, direction of travel and registration number.

DN

**• Yerranderie Book.** Further to Vince Murtagh's report in *Wild* no 12 of a book about the Yerranderie silver mines, the Oaks Historical Society (c/- Post Office, The Oaks, NSW 2570) has now published its sequel, on the township of Yerranderie.

As this former mining town in New South Wales' southern Blue Mountains is a popular bushwalking venue, many bushwalkers will want to obtain the book. It contains many maps and old photographs in its 60 pages and costs \$6.00.

DN

**• Crazy Paving?** The Blue Mountains Shire Council is reported to be responsible for the 'improved' access to the Mt Boyce climbing area. (See *Wildlife*.) It has widened the cliff-top walking track, mainly so the view can be appreciated by tourists. To improve the view it cut down numerous trees and dumped them over the edge of the cliff. Rockclimbers following the base of the cliff now not only have to wade through a mess of dead tree branches but, with increased tourism to the area, are more at risk from falling rocks dislodged by the tourists above.

Roles have been reversed with this development. The Council banned climbing on the Three Sisters because it believed that tourists were at peril from climbers in that area dislodging rocks.

Both climbers and tourists are at risk from trains when visiting Mt Boyce as they must still cross the railway line on foot. It therefore seems strange that this area was chosen for upgrading.

Stephen Bunton

**• Australian Rogaining Championships.** This year's Championships will be held on the full moon week-end of 11-12 August. The area chosen for the course, the Southern Tablelands of New South Wales, is central major cities. Gently undulating farm country with clear and forested areas, the course is designed to cater for all standards. Details can be obtained by writing to Australian Rogaining Championships 1984, c/- 5 Ellen Street, Randwick, NSW 2033.

**• Budawangs Search.** Two bushwalkers overdue for four days in the Budawangs in torrential rain were finally rescued by helicopter after an intensive search. Poor weather made searching difficult for the 40-odd volunteers from the New South Wales Bushwalkers Search and Rescue Group.

The lost pair, Laurel Heath and Keith Robinson of Sydney, had intended to set up a base camp at the Castle. They lost their bearings near Mt Haughton and subsequently found themselves below Mt Elliott where they waited until help arrived in the form of a Naval helicopter.

RL

**• Write On.** The Australian Outdoor Writers' Association held its Annual General Meeting in conjunction with a week-end programme of seminars in February. Leading communicators in the areas of outdoor environmental and recreational media gathered at Point Wolstonecraft on Lake Macquarie, New South Wales, to discuss the problems sometimes experienced within their profession and to gain a greater understanding of the requirements of their market.

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Among the decisions taken at the meeting was the inauguration of an annual award for excellence in outdoor journalism.

• **Speed.** Many walkers and ski tourers have probably heard of the Perisher to Kiandra (New South Wales) trip being done in a day, with the previous best times (as far as is known) being Robbo Kilpinen's ski crossing in August 1964 from Cooma Hut, Perisher, to Kiandra in eight hours 11 minutes. Over the same route, Jim Box completed a tiger walk in eight hours 15 minutes.

Last February Peter Treseder did this classic tiger walk in seven hours 52 minutes, after a couple of earlier reconnaissance trips. His route was Perisher bus depot — Schlink Pass — the Brassy Mountains — Happy Jacks — Kiandra Department of Main Roads depot.

Will the ski record be next?

*David Drohan*

• **Snowy Developments.** The proposed large ski resort at Mt Selwyn in the Mt Kosciusko region is to be developed over the next three years. The resort will ultimately have capacity for 3,800 skiers, the same as Thredbo.

The New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service has been severely criticized in the Press for its construction of a steel mesh walking track on Mt Kosciusko.

Local ski touring operators Wilderness Expeditions and Skilltrek have combined their cross country ski operations.

• **Saving the Murray.** The long-standing problem of salinity in the Murray River, and other problems such as erosion, appear, at last, to be capable of being solved. A recent report indicates that scientists' understanding of our greatest river and its problems has been greatly assisted in recent years by the use of computers and other modern technology.

• **Gippsland Logging.** Errinundra Plateau and the Rodger River region in the forest country of East Gippsland, were in the news early in the year as conservationists fought to have logging stopped.

This part of the State, one of the least developed wilderness areas in Victoria, has magnificent stands of enormous shining gum trees and mountain ash believed to be up to 500 years old, and is recognized by botanists as being of ecological significance.

The Native Forests Action Council and the Australian Conservation Foundation mounted a campaign to pressure the State Government to implement its election promise to create new National Parks in East Gippsland. The campaign met with early success in 1983 when it persuaded the Government, contrary to the advice of the Forests Commission of Victoria, that there were alternatives to logging the Rodger River area, and a logging moratorium was imposed for two years while an enquiry took place. Professor Ian Ferguson of Melbourne University was recently appointed to head the enquiry.

However, early in 1984 a 'blockade' against logging on the Errinundra Plateau resulted in a marked deterioration of the political climate surrounding the issue. Despite the widely-acknowledged fact that logging in the area can only provide short-term employment prospects, the Government felt that it was politically untenable to give any further concessions to conservationists and logging is continuing on the plateau.

The NFAC will continue the campaign and seeks the support of *Wild* readers. Its telephone number is (03) 663 1561.

• **Classic.** The 1984 Wildtrek Winter Classic, which includes ski touring, running, canoeing and cycle-cross sections, will be held on 21-22 July in mountainous country near Omeo in East Gippsland, Victoria. Entries for this team endurance event close on 26 June. Further details are available from Wildtrek, (03) 67 7196.

• **Snow Good?** In March the Alpine Resorts Commission of Victoria took over the management, operation, development and promotion of Victoria's alpine resorts. One aim of the Commission is to develop the resorts for summer as well as winter use for people of all income levels. It will be responsible, for example, for the proposed development of Mt Stirling with a resort for 4,000 people.

On Mt Hotham a development company is reported to be constructing 52 apartments of a planned 156-apartment complex. The company is reported to also own the only freehold site in the Victorian snowfields — one hectare at Mt Hotham on which 337 strata title units and a hotel are to be constructed.

• **Staffed.** The Ski Touring Association of Victoria has appointed a full-time executive officer to help organize a major promotion of ski touring in Victoria.

• **Bridging.** In March a group of Friends of Bogong National Park — one of 22 'Friends groups' organized by the Victorian National Parks Association (03) 663 3591 — built four foot-bridges over creeks on the walking track to the foot of Mt Bogong's Staircase Spur.

• **Canoeing Award.** The Olegas Truchanas Canoeing Award is awarded for the best log of a canoe tour completed anywhere in Australia, or the log of a tour completed overseas by Australian canoeists.

In 1983 the Award went to Terry Belland of Western Australia for his Kimberly Kayak Expedition log. (See *Wild* no 12.)

Entries are now being received for trips completed within the period 1 January 1983 to 31 August 1984. All entries should be forwarded to the Australian Canoe Federation Touring Committee, PO Box 78, Hampton Victoria 3188. Information brochures are available on request.

*Yvonne McLaughlin*

• **Victorian Sports Congress.** The first Victorian Sports Congress was convened by the Victorian Government on 23-24 March.

Most officially-recognized sports sent delegates to the congress. However, it is interesting to note that the Nordic skiing, climbing and bushwalking organizations were not invited. Canoeing was invited only because of its competitive aspects.

The main theme of the congress was the never-ending battle to get money to promote and assist sports. Other items discussed included tenure of land by sporting organizations, and legal aspects of sport, including incorporation and insurance. The next congress is to be held in October.

*YMC*

• **Olympic Canoeists.** Nine canoeists have been selected to represent Australia at the Olympic Games in Los Angeles. They include Peter Genders (see interview in *Wild* no 6) and one woman, Liz Blencowe. The coach is Adrian Powell.

• **Tom Mitchell.** Well-known Australian ski pioneer Tom Mitchell died on 4 February, aged 77. A noted historian of north-east Victoria, Mitchell was a distinguished Australian skiing



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champion in the 1930s and the first person to represent the country in this sport. He won many international championships and pioneered skiing in the Kosciusko region.

• **Roos.** It was recently reported in the Press that the Australian Government had urged the USA since 1975 to remove its import ban on kangaroo products. It was also reported that Australia campaigned to have three types of kangaroo removed from the threatened species list under the USA Endangered Species Act and had misled the USA in grossly overstating the kangaroo population. This information is reported to have become available from documents recently released under the American Freedom of Information Act. The USA discontinued its import ban on kangaroo products in 1983, but has decided to keep red, eastern and western grey kangaroos on the threatened list, which means that the USA could ban kangaroo products from Australia at any time.

• **Oxo!** Melbourne University Mountaineering Club is celebrating its fortieth anniversary this year. This prestigious club introduced orienteering and rogaining to Australia and has a long record of walking and climbing exploration. (See Club News for further details.)

• **More Logging.** Conservationists have been protesting to prevent further logging in the Otway National Park, western Victoria. (The Park, declared in 1981, is allowed to be logged until 1985.) However, the major conservation groups opposed a 'blockade' of the logging in February by a small group of protesters, fearing the sort of reaction experienced after the Eriinundra 'blockade'.

• **The Grampians.** This outstanding mountain and bush area in western Victoria, which is to become a National Park on 1 July, has been in the news recently.

Reports have appeared in the Press of attempts by opponents of the Park to rekindle fears of an end to effective fire control in the area when it becomes a National Park. This old band wagon was mounted by the Opposition in the Victorian Parliament. However, it is reported fire protection 'would remain pretty well as is, with the Forests Commission.'

The Commission aroused considerable controversy with its 8,400 hectare burn of the northern Victoria Range in April which, it is claimed, was necessary to reduce the risk of bushfire. Critics included zoologists, biologists and archaeologists.

In March a research team discovered evidence of the existence of brush-tailed rock wallabies in the Victoria Range. The wallabies are reported to be in the highest category of endangered species. They were sighted in the Grampians in 1970, the first time since the 1920s. The most recent sighting was in 1981. A member of the team said that fire was a major problem facing the rock wallaby.

It is said that the Victorian Government will remove holiday houses in the Grampians, mainly at Zumsteins, after the area becomes a National Park.

A grant has been made under the Community Employment Programme to help protect aboriginal rock paintings in the Grampians, a number of which are in the northern Victoria Range.

The Wimmera Mail-Times reported in April that a new water storage plan is under investigation in the Grampians. The proposal is for a dam on Branch Creek, south of the

Chimney Pots, to improve Hamilton's water supply. The lower part of the creek is outside the proposed National Park (which, of course, excludes significant parts of the Grampians).

• **International Climbing Meet?** Australian rockclimber Kim Carrigan hopes to be able to organize an international climbing meet at Mt Arapiles, Victoria, in 1988. With Louise Shepherd and the Victorian Climbing Club, he has started planning the event which, he hopes, will be part of Australia's bicentennial celebrations.

• **Western Tasmania National Park.** In March the Wilderness Society launched a new campaign; to unite western Tasmania's wilderness under the protection of a 1.76 million hectare National Park which, it is claimed, would rank as one of the world's great National Parks. It would cover 38% of Tasmania, from Cradle Mountain in the north to the southern tip of the State, and double the size of protected areas.

The Society has also recommended the formation of a joint Federal-State authority to manage the proposed Western Tasmanian National Park as a single unit, and the extension of the existing World Heritage Area to include all the proposed Park.

• **Franklin Compensation.** The Federal Government has offered Tasmania \$270 million as compensation for the Franklin hydro-electric scheme and associated employment projects.

• **End of the Weld?** The Weld River valley, Tasmania, is under threat from paper and hydro-electricity interests. But the most immediate threat is from mining. It is understood that BHP has applied for rights over 236 square kilometres of the region, primarily to search for tin and gold. If this exploration is allowed, and viable deposits are found, conservationists fear that there would be a serious impact on the local landscape and mineral pollution of the Weld or Styx Rivers. They regard the Weld area as an important ecological and wilderness buffer to the South-West National Park.

Formal legal objections to BHP's application were made by the Australian Conservation Foundation. Conservationists have called on the caring public to write to BHP explaining why they object to mining and exploration of the Weld.

• **Tasmanian Cave Discoveries.** Australia's deepest cave has once again changed its identity with new discoveries on Mt Anne. Whilst visiting other caves on Mt Anne, members of the Tasmanian Caverneering Club looked at an insignificant hole in the back of the usual camp cave. This insignificant crawl eventually led to a larger cave, including two 100 metre deep shafts in close succession. The cave was named Anne-a-Kananda and is Australia's deepest cave, 373 metres.

Australia's previous deepest cave, Ice Tube, was connected to the Growling Swallet system with the discovery of Mothers Passage, in May 1983. Growling Swallet is the main conduit for all underground water in the Florentine Valley. A huge river flows into its entrance then reappears as the Junee River some eight kilometres away. Recent discoveries have gradually revealed the unknown area between these two points.

Cave diving in the Junee Resurgence has yielded passages named for Your Eyes Only. Growling Swallet has also been extended beyond the Entrance Series Sump. A complicated series of rifts and mazes has extended the length of the cave to over six

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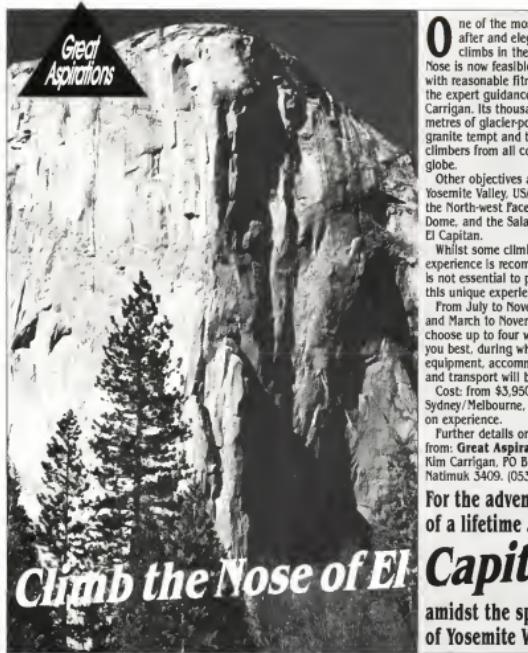
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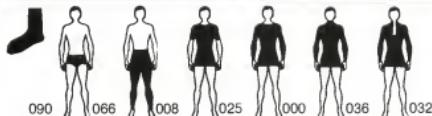
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kilometres. One of the side passages draining into Growing Swallet was identified as Ice Tube.

In February, five members of the TCC negotiated the through-trip for the first time. This is Australia's deepest, most sporting and most committing through-trip. Ice Tube is done in canyoning style, the double ropes being pulled down after each pitch is descended. The most difficult part of the ten-hour epic was dragging the packs of tackle and rope out of Growing Swallet. The newer sections of Growing Swallet are tight and muddy but the connecting rift into Mothers Passage was found to be by far the worst section of the trip.

Stephen Buntun

• **Cave Diving.** Two cave divers died in Piccaninny Ponds in April. Their bodies were found entangled in their guideline. One was reported to be 63 metres below the surface. The South Australian Government has called for a report on the deaths.

The French team's record dive in Western Australia's Cocklebiddy Cave (see article on page 56) in mid-1983, which was the world's longest cave dive (six kilometres), was beaten later in 1983 by an Australian team. Many of Australia's leading cave divers took part in this substantial expedition. Hugh Morrison, Peter Rodgers and Ron Allum passed the French mark, and Morrison went on to exceed it by 240 metres. He was able to swim further up the narrow tunnel (but not to its end!) than the French had because he carried only one air tank.

• **Bungled.** Because of a land claim by local aborigines, a tourist ban has been imposed on the Bungle Bungle Range in the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

• **Gibson Desert Camel Expedition.** This expedition, led by Warwick Deacock and Rex Ellis, left Mundwinda Station, north of Kalgoorlie, on 2 June to cross the Gibson Desert to the Rawlinson Ranges, a distance of about 800 kilometres which is expected to take six or seven weeks. The crossing will cover ground never traversed by white men and is regarded by Deacock as his most serious expedition.

• **New Zealand Alpinism.** Prominent New Zealand climber, Neal Whiston, was killed in a simple fall near Copeland Pass in February. He died of head injuries after a slide into a crevasse.

Two outstanding new routes were climbed in the Mt Cook area last summer. Kim Logan and Peter Sinclair climbed the steep gully on the left side of the Right Buttress on the South Face of Mt Hicks. On the South Face of Mt Cook, Mike Roberts and Andy Harris climbed a new line which shares the first two pitches of the route Wet Dreams then heads up left.

Considerable controversy was generated when the New Zealand Prime Minister and the Japanese Ambassador jointly requested a party of seven deaf mute Japanese climbers at Plateau Hut, waiting to climb Mt Cook, to leave. The party was helicopter off the mountain. The Prime Minister's actions are probably unprecedented in the annals of mountaineering.

A New Zealand Avalanche Institute has been founded to develop "the highest standards of safety and competence for all people dealing with avalanche hazards in New Zealand". Well-known alpine guide Dave McNulty is the Institute's first Director.

• **Australian Himalayan News.** Australians will be taking part in no less than three separate attempts on Mt Everest in the next 12 months.

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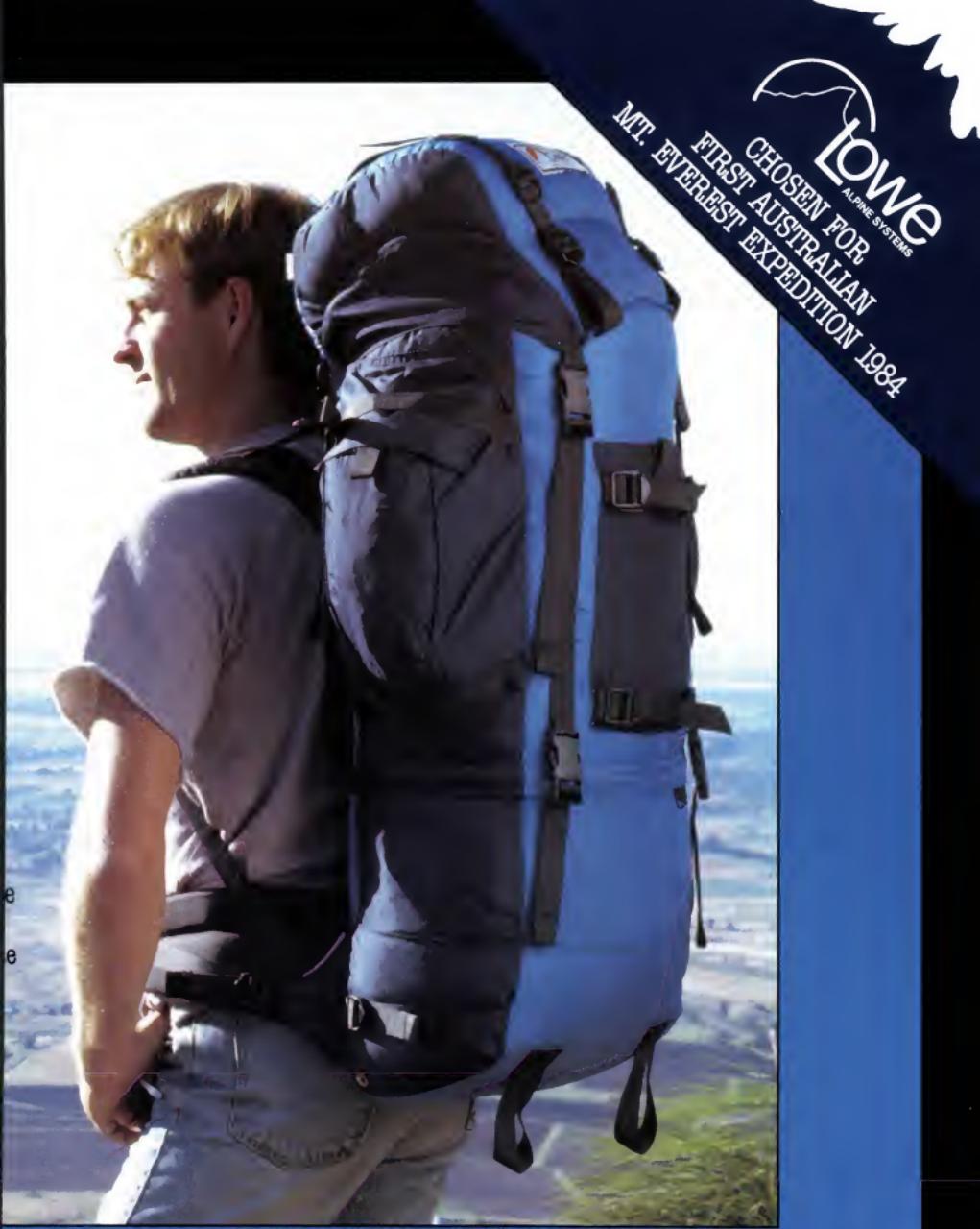
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attempts on Mt Everest in the next 12 months. The First Australian Mt Everest Expedition (reported in *Wild* no 11) is to attempt the world's highest peak by a new variant on the North Ridge route from Tibet this year. A second expedition including Australians will be tackling the peak from the other side.

Six Australian and New Zealand climbers will arrive in Nepal in August to attempt the West Ridge of Mt Everest. The team will be making the attempt in semi-Alpine style, without supplementary oxygen. Peter Hillary and Kim Logan from New Zealand and Fred From, Roddy Mackenzie, Jon Muir and Craig Nottle from Australia make up this strong team.

The expedition begins with a fortnight-long walk from Kathmandu to Base Camp at 5,340 metres. On the mountain the team will follow the West Ridge route first climbed by a large American expedition in 1963. The route passes through the treacherous Khumbu ice-fall and Western Cwm before climbing up to the Western Shoulder at 7,500 metres. It then follows the frontier ridge between Tibet and Nepal to the summit. The team will spend a month acclimatizing at Base Camp and on the route

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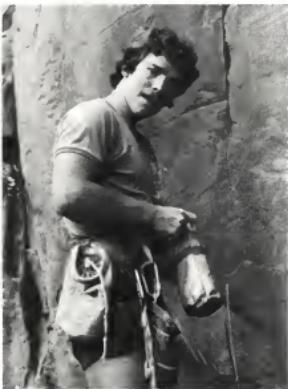
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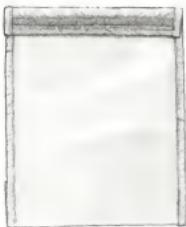
John Muir, top, and Peter Hillary, off to Everest. Glenn Tempest, top, and Fred From as far as the Western Shoulder before making summit attempts in late September and early October. The West Ridge of Everest has had very few ascents, and none without supplementary oxygen. The expedition aims to place all members on the summit.

Expatriate Australian climber Greg Child has been asked to join a major American expedition to Mt Everest's West Ridge in 1985.

The Australian and New Zealand section of the Himalayan Club has booked the major

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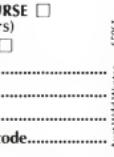
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Chinese peak Mt Muztag Ata (7,546 metres) for an attempt in 1985. The peak is not technically difficult and a ski ascent is under consideration. Steve McDowell is expedition convener and can be contacted at Bushgear, Canberra.

Unreported earlier was an attempt by five members of the Australian National University Mountaineering Club on the impressive Nepalese peak Kwangde (6,187 metres) in April 1983. Guy de Lacey, Ray Vran and Richard Howes were forced to retreat, in epic conditions, only 100 metres from the summit after a bold attempt.

• **Australians in Yosemite.** Australian Kim Carrigan has come up with a novel idea for the adventurous; a guided ascent of one of the most famous rock climbs in the world — the 1,000 metre Nose Route on California's granite peak El Capitan. A veteran of a number of extremely difficult El Cap climbs, Carrigan acknowledges that the Nose may not be everyone's cup of tea, but is confident that there are people with the necessary mental and physical (not to mention financial!) attributes to be expertly guided up the 'vertical granite desert' and enjoy it!

According to an unconfirmed report, Tony Dignan has made more major ascents in Yosemite including an early repeat of an El Cap climb on which he and his partner ran out of food several days from the top, and an extremely rapid ascent of the Nose.

• **Caver Extraordinary.** Australian cavers are still boggling at the news of Sydney caver Al Warild's solo descent last summer of the 1,000 metre deep Mexican cave Li Nitia in 47 hours of almost non-stop activity.

Stephen Bunton writes: 'Solo caving is one of the most committing of all reckless activities. Not only does the solo caver need confidence in his caving, scrambling and climbing ability, he must keep his light going, carry sufficient food, carbide and gear for emergencies. Warild's equipment was crammed into two packs which weighed a total of 36 kilograms ... For almost two days his conscience was his only companion.'

• **Sarajavo Winter Olympics.** For the first time, Australia was represented by a Nordic team at a Winter Olympics. Until Sarajavo, Australia had never been represented by more than one cross country skier, but this year we had two — Chris Allan from Wangaratta and David Hislop from Sydney. Three races were held: 15 kilometres, 30 kilometres and 50 kilometres. Our best results were in the 15 kilometre event, with Hislop and Allan finishing 59th and 64th respectively in a field of 91. Hislop's time of 47 minutes 25.5 seconds was 14.48% behind the winner's 41 minutes 25.6 seconds. Not only was this a personal best for Hislop, but the best result for any Australian cross country skier at an Olympics.

Andrew Paul from Wodonga was our biathlon representative. Biathlon involves Nordic racing with a rifle slung over the shoulder, interspersed with periods of shooting. Two races were held: 10 kilometres and 20 kilometres. Paul's better performance was in the 20 kilometre event in which he was 47th in a field of 64. His shooting was 12th best overall, a creditable performance in an esoteric sport.

• **Corrections.** The photo on pages 28-29 of Wild no 12 was uncaptioned. It is of Broad Peak in the Karakoram, by Greg Child. The photo on page 36 shows Moorhead and is by From, not vice versa. On page 89 'Marechal' was misspelt. (Sorry we forgot to mention you in the Equipment notes, Wayne!)



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# Contributors

**Andrew Barnes** can be found working in Bushgear or as a kayak instructor when he is not paddling an intractable rapid surrounded by magnificent scenery. For variety he pursues the elusive goal of achieving smooth, linked Telemarks high in the Alps, or leads an occasional outdoor trip.

His most recent venture, in partnership with two other 'river rats', is the production of a Landmarc Rivermap, which is expected to be the first in a series.

**Andrew Brookes** was introduced to bushwalking at an early age by his father. While studying at Melbourne University, and later teaching mathematics at a metropolitan high school, he spent his spare time bushwalking and ski touring, mostly with the Victorian Mountain Tramping Club. In 1981 he was appointed teacher-in-charge of Glen Waverley High School Camp at Nayook. When not running camps he divides his time between instructing on Education Department in-service courses, ski touring, and photographic trips.

He can often be found at rogaining events, proclaiming rather too loudly as the results are announced that he is not interested in competition.

**Francis Le Guen** is the youngest member of the Explorers Club in France and a photographer at the Sygma Press Agency. He has been filming and diving for ten years in



caves all around the world and has a total of 600 hours' cave diving. He has already achieved more than 50 'first' explorations. Francis spends his time between journalism, filming, conferences, writing books and, of course, preparing for future expeditions.

**Sue Mathews** runs her own management consultancy in England, specializing in personnel and management training. She is preparing for her Ph D in medieval history after recently graduating from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Her background includes a spell in the Women's Royal Naval Service and nearly 15 years in personnel and training in the United Kingdom, Hong Kong and South Africa.

During her first trip to Australia Sue spent six weeks in New South Wales, mainly in Sydney and Canberra, and fitted in two walking trips — one to the Ben Boyd National Park and the other to the Budawangs. When in South Africa Sue did a lot of mountain walking, and some mountaineering. She describes herself as a 'country hick trapped inside a townie's lifestyle', and has published articles in both Australia and England. Aged 36, she lives with her cat in an old house in London.

**Colin Monteath**, born in Scotland in 1948, lived around Sydney from 1957 to 1971. A keen rockclimber, he edited rockclimbing guides, was President of the Sydney University Rockclimbing Club and co-editor of *Thrutch*, the Australian climbing magazine, from 1969 to 1972.

Colin spent six straight seasons in the New Zealand Alps before working 12 months as a mountaineer for the Mt Cook National Park. His numerous ascents of Mt Cook included the Caroline Face and the first winter ascent of the



East Ridge. As a member of the 1974 Commonwealth Andean Expedition he was involved, directly or indirectly, with 19 new routes in the Cordillera Vilcanota of south-east Peru. He made his first expedition to Antarctica in 1973 when, as Field Leader, he was responsible for running the survival training and rescue team. He acted as Field Assistant with the Italian Expedition that completed the first ascent of the West Face of the Obelisk in the Dry Valleys.

After 12 months in British Columbia, Colin returned to New Zealand in 1975 to become Field Officer with the New Zealand Antarctic Research Programme. He has now completed 18 trips to the Antarctic, spanning nine summers, acting as adviser, dog driver, guide, photographer, climber, rescue worker and the crazy-man who abseiled into the inner crater of Mt Erebus in 1978.

In 1980 he was climbing leader of the ill-fated Australian Annapurna III Expedition, and in 1982 a member of the New Zealand Garhwal Expedition which reached 6,400 metres on the West Ridge of Shivaling.

**John Porter** has been walking in the Australian bush for almost 20 years and ski touring for nearly ten. He has explored wilderness areas in Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia, Nepal, Borneo and Europe (if Europe may be said to have wilderness areas).

A non-gregarious type of character, John says many of his most interesting forays have been solo expeditions. He now lives in Cooma, New South Wales, where he is employed as a civil engineer.

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# Getting Started

Reading the Weather, with Gary Tischer.



• TO MANY PEOPLE THE WEATHER IS LITTLE MORE than a topic of conversation: to the person involved in wilderness sports it can mean the difference between carefree enjoyment and a serious situation.

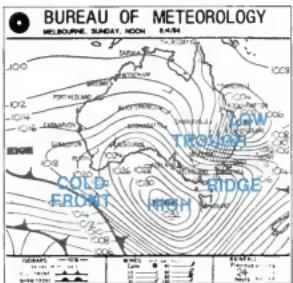
On day trips as well as extended expeditions, an understanding of weather phenomena is of the utmost importance. Before setting out on any trip, information about the expected conditions should be obtained from the best available source, be it the local media or park ranger.

A copy of the latest synoptic chart can give a good indication of the expected weather. Always check the time and date of the chart as these can be over 12 hours old. Normally a high pressure system or ridge of high pressure will mean stable conditions and good weather. Conversely, a low pressure system, a trough of low pressure or a cold front will generally mean unstable conditions and bad weather. These weather systems move from west to east.

Another point to check is where the prevailing winds are coming from, since this affects the amount of moisture in the air. Winds from the same direction in different parts of Australia can produce very different weather due to the type of surface over which they travel before reaching the particular area in which you are.

A south-westerly air flow over Bass Strait would produce cold, moisture-laden air, while a south-westerly flow over central Queensland would produce warm, dry air.

On a synoptic chart the prevailing winds flow



parallel to the isobars, the contour-like lines marking high and low pressure systems. The winds flow in an anti-clockwise direction around a high and in a clockwise direction around a low.

Once away from civilization, weather

... what sort of clouds? (Over the Fortress, the Grampians, Victoria.) Geoff Gledhill forecasts may not be readily obtainable. It is then up to the walker to look at the weather signs and decide what they may indicate. The most obvious signs are clouds or the lack of them.

There are four main groups of clouds, cumuliform, stratiform, nimbus and cirrus. Cumuliform, described as heaped clouds, are often separated from each other by clear spaces formed by convection currents (the movement of air caused by heat). **Cumulus** clouds are very common, normally appearing in the afternoon. The precipitation from cumulus is in the form of showers, the intensity being governed by the vertical height of the cloud. That is, the higher the vertical growth of the cloud, the heavier the precipitation.

The next cloud type, stratiform, are sheets or layers covering large areas. Stratiform clouds are formed by the gradual upward movement of moist air occurring with low pressure systems. **Stratus** will normally produce drizzle with overcast skies.

The third group is an extension of the previous two groups. **Nimbus**, by definition, produces precipitation, and it does so in large amounts. Cumulonimbus clouds are known to

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many of us as foreshadowing thunderstorms, producing high winds and very heavy showers of rain, sometimes snow and hail, accompanied by thunder and lightning. The easily recognized anvil-shaped tops of these clouds may rise to over 12,000 metres. Although producing severe conditions, these clouds generally pass within an hour. Cumulonimbus clouds are associated with cold fronts and related local conditions.

The other form of nimbus cloud is nimbostratus, which produces copious amounts of rain and snow. Anyone who has been caught in a soaking tent for days will recognize this one, associated with more intense lows and troughs.

**Cirrus**, a very high cloud of wispy, hair-like appearance, is something of an antecedent as the last cloud group since it produces no precipitation. It can mean that a warm front is approaching. However, warm fronts, unlike cold fronts, are very rare in Australia.

There is little warning of an approaching cold front due to the lack of early pre-frontal cloud. A few hours after sighting the large build-ups of cumulus and cumulonimbus clouds marking the surface position of the cold front, it will have reached you. But take care — in mountainous areas, the warning time can be reduced considerably due to the terrain restricting your view of the approaching cloud. With the passing of the cold front, the winds will swing from the west or north-west to the south or south-west as the temperature rapidly decreases. Generally, the more intense the wind, the more severe the front. Due to the large area of Australia, cold fronts affect southern parts such as Tasmania and Victoria much more than they do northern Australia, where very intense lows, called cyclones, produce much of the bad weather.

As can be seen, knowing what sort of cloud is overhead can give a good indication of present and future weather conditions. This is difficult to ascertain if the cloud base is low and higher clouds cannot be seen, particularly at night. Certain precipitation falls from different clouds, so if the form of precipitation is known, the cloud type can be determined. The following table can be used as a guide:

**Drizzle** stratocumulus or stratus

**Rain or snow** altostratus (intermittent or continuous precipitation) or nimbostratus (continuous, heavy precipitation)

**Showers of rain or snow** cumulus or cumulonimbus

**Showers of hail** cumulonimbus

For most people engaged in outdoor activities the influence of a high pressure system would provide the most favourable weather — cloudless skies, warm sunshine and little wind. Morning fog is associated with highs and is usually a good indication of a fine day ahead. Another indication of a high pressure system is the reduced visibility due to haze and smoke not being able to escape into the upper atmosphere.

These weather systems affect large areas, but local conditions may differ to some extent due to a variety of reasons. Coastal regions usually receive a sea breeze in the afternoon, sometimes contrary to what might be expected by studying a synoptic chart. In the mountains the warm air during the day will rise, causing a breeze up the slope, whereas at night the cooling air will flow downhill, accumulating in gullies and making them cold campsites. Such characteristics can confuse someone new to an area, which is why it is invaluable to be in the company of a person familiar with local conditions and weather patterns.

If you are properly prepared, and weather wise, the wilderness can be experienced and enjoyed, no matter what the weather. •



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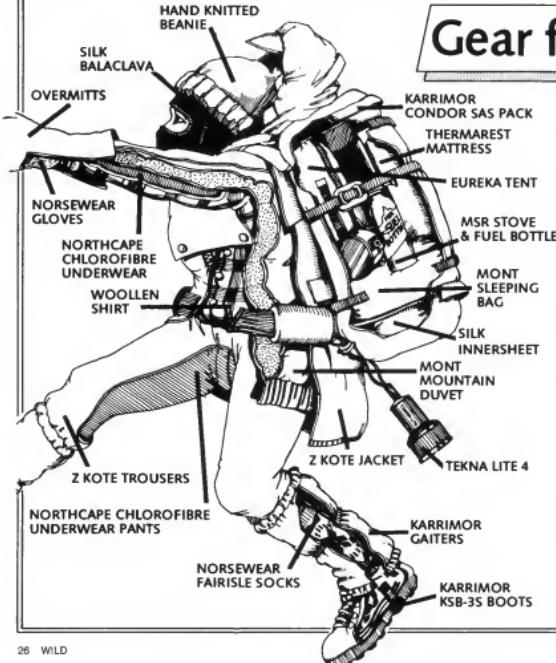
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# Croajing

Lazy days walking the beaches of Victoria's most eastern National Park



# olong

Park, with Tom Millar

•THERE IS SOMETHING PLEASANT ABOUT being near water, be it a mountain stream, a glacial tarn or the pounding of a great ocean. Bearing in mind that most of the Victorian high country would be inundated by puffing bushwalkers over the Easter holiday, we opted for the Pacific Ocean.

When I mentioned we were going to Croajingolong the stock reply was 'Where's that?' For the ignorant, it is a relatively new National Park, established in 1979, as far east as you can go in Victoria. It includes approximately 100 kilometres of coastline and about ten

just east of Point Hicks, to Mallacoota, in four days. A car shuffle was necessary, so Mark, Paul and Phil set off for the three and one-half hour return trip. The rest of us were to proceed at a slow pace, allowing the car shufflers to catch up. The day's planned walk was 20 kilometres, a long way considering the time lost with the cars.

Reaching the beach, a gentle breeze wafted salt spray into our faces. In one direction, kilometre on kilometre of sand stretched hazily into the distance to merge with a far headland. In the other, Point



kilometres of hinterland, from the New South Wales border westward. While the Park has some interesting walking through magnificent silvertop forest, it was the coastline that attracted us.

The main disadvantage of a walk in Croajingolong is getting there, particularly in holiday periods. This time it meant a long, slow, frustrating drive wedged in interminable lines of towed boats and caravans headed for Lakes Entrance and Mallacoota. Jo and I managed to snooze in the back seat while Mark hammered the Datsun, but I had visions of becoming another road-toll statistic. We reached Thurra River at about 1 am and met the rest of our party of nine. It being a clear, calm night, we dosed down under a tarpaulin.

The campsite at Thurra River is a magical place with a freshwater river gently flowing past reeds, forest and happy campers shouting 'Hot cross buns... Come and get them!' Wrens hopped about picking up the crumbs and herons ambled lazily in knee-deep water. But it was the background roar of the surf that eventually dragged us away.

The walk was to be from Thurra River,

*Victoria's forgotten east coast is best experienced on foot. Andrew Brookes and Michael Collie*

Hicks lighthouse reared up from Cape Everard like a giant phallic symbol. During the day it would shrink to a matchstick, vaguely discernible through the evening haze.

Taking our shoes off to cross the mouth of the Thurra River, we set off at a leisurely pace and soon came across an interesting sight — three people walking towards us, one apparently wearing a fur stole round her neck. Getting closer, the stole turned into a cat. Speculation arose as to whether it was dead or alive, but a movement from the animal confirmed the latter.

Our first rest was at the mouth of the mighty Mueller River. This river, however, was barred by sand, as were most of the rivers we were to cross. Apparently they flow into the sea for most of the year, but their present state was going to make water scarce because the lagoons were brackish.

We had an extended lunch break, preceded by the first of many swims in surprisingly warm water, at the junction of sand and rock at Petrel Point. As we eventually donned our packs, three black dots were sped hurrying along the beach, indicating our car shufflers would soon be with us.

Rock-hopping the next section of





coastline was a pleasant change. The rounded granite gave easy walking with plenty of grip for shoes and it was cooler than the sand. Time, however, was somewhat worrying as the afternoon was wearing on and there were still eight kilometres to Wingan, so we continued more expeditiously until an appalling stench of seaweed assailed us as we rounded the corner into a small inlet. The inlet was packed with seething kelp which oozed as the swell ran through it — an amazing sight as well as an amazing smell! At the head of the inlet a small

over Rame Head. Ti-tree gave way to an ancient banksia forest, the warty old bark contrasting with the smiling faces of the 'banksia men', before the track dropped down along a narrow ridge to more open eucalypt forest.

We rejoined the beach at a small cove where oysters grew on the rocks and fish abounded. Not surprisingly, it was oysters *au naturel* for morning tea! Salt drying on our skin, we continued on to Wingan and were soon after confronted by a formidable natural obstacle — the entrance to the inlet, where a swift current



spring of pure, fresh water emerged from the hillside, so when we found a suitable campsite a short distance along the coast the decision to stop for the night was unanimous.

Tents were pitched, driftwood collected, the night faded and we waited for the moon to rise. Gradually the large red orb crept up from behind the horizon, changing from orange to yellow and finally to white. Our campsite was now bathed in moonlight and we came to grips with the hazards of beach camping.

The major hazard was sand, which infiltrated to our plates, our food, our sleeping bags and underpants. The other most noteworthy hazard was mosquitoes. The East Gippsland coastal mosquito appears to be particularly large and aggressive and our tents were attacked by squadron after squadron of dive bombing mozzies, so what with mosquitoes and sand there was little sleep.

Next morning's sunrise was as beautiful as the previous night's moonrise, and an early morning swim was much appreciated before we climbed over the dunes and headed into thick ti-tree, intending to follow the signposted track

*Red River* only provides fresh water well inland. Above, walking towards Sandpatch Point. Brookes

separates beach from rocks on the other side. Some walkers have waded across further up the inlet and others have sought assistance from fishermen with boats. Our solution was to wade out towards the Skerries for 100 metres, where a fan of sand reduced the water depth to chest height. (Packs were put into large plastic bags reserved for just such an emergency, and either carried overhead or strapped on backs.) It was a difficult situation, the channel current flowing seaward and the surf breaking around the Skerries and hitting us from different directions. Taller members of the party fared quite well, but shorter people, such as Jo, had some problems; every time a wave came through she would be lifted by her pack, which was quite buoyant, and tipped forward.

Eventually everyone made it more or less successfully, and two topless bathers watched in awe as nine bushwalkers appeared from the sea. They were less impressed by our presence than we with theirs, and quickly vanished from sight.

Our next problem was to shoot the channel. Entering the water just inside the inlet I was quickly whisked away by the current, and it was not long before all of us, sweeping past fishermen and wide-



Crossing Eastby Creek and, left, 'banksia man', guardian of Croajingolong. Brookes and Paul Thomas, eyed children, were shot out the entrance of the inlet and scrambling ashore. There was then some good body-surfing between Wingan Point and the Skerries where huge dumpers gave short but exhilarating rides.

After lunch on the rocks at Wingan Point it was on to the lagoon at Red River for the evening camp. A four-wheel-drive



**Two topless bathers watched in awe as nine bushwalkers appeared from the sea.**

camp was passed on the way to the head of the lagoon to collect fresh water, the filthy, squalid camp, cut out from the scrub, contrasting bleakly with the picturesque, clean beach.

The next day we decided to round

Sandpatch Point rather than cross it by the track. The name 'Sandpatch Point' conjures up images of pleasant, gentle walking. Not so! It would be more aptly called 'Grunge, Puff, Pant Point'. The walk out was enjoyable, and the ocean turned on a spectacular display of huge breakers, but rounding the corner, the rock changed from granite to low grade metamorphics, and sediments of sandstone, siltstone and shale made walking difficult. Excursions into thick scrub became more frequent as we rounded inlets and crossed blow holes. Progress slowed to a crawl as we clung to the sides of cliffs, acutely aware of the swell breaking beneath our feet. Eventually, after crossing a natural bridge, we waded an inlet between waves to get back on the beach, where a small waterfall provided a welcome freshwater shower.

There was no question of rounding Little Rame Head so we followed the track through tussock grass to our next campsite, a small beach hidden between cliffs. Here house-sized boulders had fallen from the cliffs, segmenting the beach. The folded sediments in the rock gave interesting geological reading.

The final day's walking was interrupted by a swim at Shipwreck Creek. Cars can get here quite easily, and we met a group of cycle tourers who had ridden in. Our cars were parked at an airstrip an hour or so ahead. Then there was nothing to do but finish the scroggin, change into clean clothes and head for home.

Croajingolong had given us a fine trip. All we could have asked by way of improvement would have been more time. •

## Just Coastin'

I ARRIVED AT MALLACOOTA AT THE HEIGHT OF THE summer tourist season, ready for some solitude after another term of introducing teenagers to the joys of bushwalking, mud and leeches. A car-park had been established at Shipwreck Creek since my previous visit seven years before, so I decided to start my walk there. I remembered a slow trip staying right on the coast, negotiating cliffs and pushing through scrub. On this occasion Plan A was a walk to Red River, camp for two nights and explore the area, then return the same way. Plan B was whatever else happened.

I took the track to Benedore River; the cliffs and scrub of the coastal route could wait for a trip with companions. A fierce bushfire had razed this area about 12 months earlier, and now the fresh green of regeneration contrasted sharply with black charcoal. Contemplating this scene of rejuvenation and awaiting the advent of a suitably profound thought, I was startled by the arrival instead of a four-wheel-drive vehicle. Later I met the occupants strolling on the sand near Benedore River, a National Park Ranger interpreting the Park for two young ladies.

Last time I had been here I had provided some amusement for the rest of the party by treading on a snake. Both the snake and I had decided our best hope lay in flight, but the snake's admirably energetic efforts to implement his plan were thwarted by the fact that I, somewhat slower to react than he, was still standing on his tail. This was soon corrected as I took off, making him angry by stomping on his head in my haste to leave. As a nostalgic tribute to that event, I was now sporting knee-high red gaiters which would not have been out of place in a trendy aerobics class.

There was supposed to be a track skirting round the back of Sandpatch Point. Following the rocks along the shore for a suitable distance, I took to a patch of burnt scrub and headed inland to intersect it and, to my surprise, found the track

more or less where the 1:100,000 map put it. I arrived at Red River in time to enjoy the evening alone on the beach. At dusk a couple in a canoe returned down the estuary to their camp some distance from mine. There was no one else around.

Camping in lousy solitude has its advantages, but that night I would have welcomed some companions to dilute the mosquito attack. Whatever the attractions of sleeping under an open fly, insect protection is not one of them (insert ad for mosquito-proof tent here). These mosquitoes were attracted by insect repellent. They were entertained by the netting I draped over myself. First they bit through it. When that became boring, they formed teams to lift the edges and swarm underneath. At the first hint of daylight I went to the estuary and jumped in, then lit a fire and stood in the smoke.

After checking out the beach in the morning light for artistic-type photos, I implemented Plan B and headed back to Mallacoota. On the way I saw five young women camped on the beach near Benedore River. I tried to impress one (impressing five seemed unlikely) with my new-found knowledge of the location of the track.

With a spare day to fill in before I was due to meet some friends for another trip I drove to Wingan Inlet, and floated across on my Li-Lo to visit the section of coast I had missed because of the mosquitoes. I met the five ladies again, at the last camp of their leisurely trip. On the whole, they told me, bushwalking was more enjoyable without men. Failing to take the hint, I drank their peppermint tea, told my life story, issued gratuitous advice, and joined them for a swim before returning to Wingan.

Men or not, I could only concur with their assessment that this section of coast provides some superior walking. •

Andrew Brookes

## Croajingolong National Park Information

STRETCHING FOR NEARLY 100 KILOMETRES along Victoria's coast from Sydenham Inlet to the New South Wales border, Croajingolong National Park is about equal distance from Melbourne and Sydney. It adjoins the Nardoo Nature Reserve across the border.

While the Park has excellent potential for multi-day walks, there are also many attractions for families and individuals who prefer to establish a base camp from which day walks, fishing and

swimming can be enjoyed.

**Camping.** There are serviced commercial camps at Mallacoota, Genoa, Cann River and Bemm River. Basic camping facilities are provided by the National Parks Service at Wingan Inlet and at the Thurra River mouth. Booking is necessary for holiday periods. Bush camping is allowed in most parts of the Park but Park staff should be contacted in advance.

**Park Offices.** Princes Highway, Cann River; phone (051) 58 6351; Genoa Road, Mallacoota,

phone (051) 58 0263.

**Maps.** National Mapping sheets Eden, Mallacoota and Cann (all 1:100,000) cover the Park. Altona Guides 'Croajingolong National Park and Approaches' (1:125,000) covers the whole Park on one double-sided sheet with notes.

The National Parks Service produces Parknotes with basic information and a simple map on the reverse. •





● ENTHUSIASM FOR THE DAY'S PADDLING was muted. It had rained all night. Our wetsuits hung limp and wet from the line we had strung up the day before. Miraculously, the drizzle stopped as we ate breakfast, the clouds started to lift and we could see the hills surrounding the Swampy Plains River.

Many skiers and bushwalkers will have crossed this river, speeding along the Alpine Way toward Mt Kosciusko, but it is relatively unknown to bushwalkers and canoeists alike. It was soon to provide one of my most memorable day's paddling.

An hour after struggling from our tents each paddler slipped into the water and scraped his way down the first rapid, then followed the river as it meandered through islands overgrown with blackberries and across shallow pebble races, giving little indication of the sudden change in character it would shortly undergo. An hour's paddling brought us to the fire track, where a large sign reads: 'WARNING: ENTRY BEYOND THIS POINT AT OWN RISK. DANGEROUS WATER': We laughed as a groggy looking fisherman crawled out of his tent, his unfriendly glances encouraging us to paddle on.

Almost immediately the river felt as if it had a new sense of purpose. Large boulders flanking the banks replaced blackberry bushes as it narrowed and deepened. A fern-choked gully, bisected by a tiny stream, tumbled to the water's edge. A boulder-strewn corner marked our approach to the first major rapid and frothing white water flowed over a drop and round a bend, necessitating fast, fluent paddling to avoid broadsiding a huge

rock on the right-hand bank.

Tony, the only member of our seven-man group to have previously paddled the 'Swampy', warned us to check from the bank any rapids not obviously runnable from river level. We were within an hour or two of an uncanoeable rapid situated within the Devil's Grip Gorge.

We continued more cautiously. The banks became increasingly steep as the river deepened and narrowed; it flowed faster as the gradient increased. At times we felt we were floating through a mysterious maze. Huge boulders, eroded into strange and dramatic shapes, partially

blocked the river. We paddled through kayak-wide gaps, over small drops and through rocky labyrinths until a slight broadening of the river heralded the next big rapid.

I drew my kayak on to a flat rock to check on safety. A large log blocked the main water flow, forcing each paddler over a shallow drop and almost directly on to a rock-strewn right-hand run. The seventh and last paddler was the only one to shoot it cleanly, to be met by a barrage of derogatory remarks on his paddling skill!

Somebody asked Tony how far it was to the grade six section in the gorge. In true



Brian Wright negotiates the last turns of 'The Knuckleduster' rapid. Above, a portage in the Devil's Grip Gorge. All photos Barnes

# Swampy Saga

Draining the southern Snowy Mountains, the Swampy Plains River is dramatic and rarely paddled; by Andrew Barnes.

canoeist's style he could not remember exactly, but he thought it was closest.

Soon we found ourselves in another foaming rapid with a small but tricky stopper under the last drop. Sitting in the crystal clear pool below was an enormous 'rock toad'. Eroded to that shape by centuries of Swampy Plains water, it sat and patiently waited, ready to swallow the unwary kayaker who capsized in the rapid above.

Another half-hour of challenging small drops interspersed with tight, twisting turns brought us to the top of a rumbling,

into the biggest drop. Then a fast right-hand turn in front of a long boulder was necessary because the left-hand chute deteriorated into a difficult rock choke.

Tim shot the rapid in fine style, followed closely by John who (in his capacity as entertainment officer) was forced to roll twice in succession. He emerged with bleeding hands and promptly christened it 'The Knuckleduster'.

After my run through, still feeling somewhat dry-mouthed, I sat down with my camera as Brian made his approach. I could not see the first two turns but

We lunched on a superb pebble beach, arguing about the grade we had just paddled, which some thought technically more difficult than anything on the Indi two days earlier.

From then on the river was somewhat quieter, but the forms the water had carved were even more impressive. Rounding one corner, Brian and I paddled into a rock cave and found a perfectly round window hollowed through a ten centimetre thick wall. We peered through as the rest of the group paddled toward us, then joined them in marvelling at how the rock had been eroded into whorls and hollows, much like Swiss cheese but not as easy to make and nowhere near as tasty!

The last two hours we took at a cracking pace through consistent grade two waters, Tony leading. Occasionally a larger drop



boulder-strewn section through which the path could not be seen from river level. Rockclimbing skills are not exactly the forte of kayakers, but inspection of this rapid meant a scramble through slippery wet rocks. 'Bouldering' is the correct term among the rockclimbing fraternity. Our reward was to be confronted by a roaring, churning, twisting rapid. Tony announced that this was the first part of the portage. Just round the corner, separated from the rapid we were looking at by only 20 metres of grade two water, the whole river disappeared under three huge boulders, the heart of the Devils Grip Gorge and completely uncanoeable.

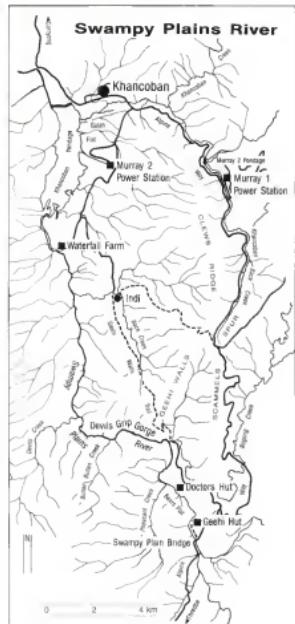
Perversely, Tim started to discuss the best way to shoot the rapid. Lemming like, the rest of the group chipped in, pointing out the best route, difficult turns and what to avoid. Tony pointed out that on his previous trip they had portaged this rapid and the extremely serious consequences of capsizing and being swept round the corner. Tim, however, had already decided to paddle it so he clambered back to his kayak, the rest of us positioning ourselves with rescue ropes.

The approach to the main fall was demanding. Two twisting narrow turns led into a small stopper, round a boulder and

spotted him just as he dropped into the stopper. Immediately thrown off course, a finely executed bow draw set him back on line but, too late to make the right-angle turn, he was swept into the left-hand rock choke. Trying to turn through a difficult, narrow chute, he capsized. Momentarily the kayak was caught upside-down between two rocks. It looked as if Brian, alarmingly close to the blocked-up rapid, would be forced to swim when water pressure forced his kayak free. A very relieved paddler rolled up and wound his way through the remaining turns.

When the whole group had paddled the rapid we started to portage. Large, rough boulders blocked the way as we manhandled our boats along the right bank. The quickest route meant passing the kayaks across truck-size boulders blocking the river and roping them down into the foaming pool below.

Embarkation an hour later was a precarious procedure as the water frothed and surged. Val held my kayak as I clipped on my spray-deck, and immediately he let go I had to negotiate a narrow slot, followed by yet another maze of boulders. Apprehensively I peered through tight channels, fearing a huge drop might be just round the next boulder!



would provide entertainment. Tim decided to play in the small stopper below one of them but seemed quite surprised when he was suddenly sucked in up to the neck! He tried being towed out but was finally forced to Eskimo roll to escape.

As Waterfall Farm came into view we fell over ourselves trying to describe a memorable day's paddling. Superlatives abounded, perhaps the most telling comment coming from Rob when he described the experience as being 'like doing the Franklin in a day'.

Tim Stone emerges from the 'Rock Toad' rapid and, above, negotiates the 'Big Log' rapid.





Skiing the Cobberas



# Alone

John Porter succumbs to the irresistible winter charm of these remote Victorian peaks.

• THE SNOW WAS BRISKLY COLD, though quite dry. By the time I had shovelled it away and fitted the snow-chains, my hands were almost numb. I found a place about 100 metres down the mountain where I could just manage to manoeuvre the car round, but by the time I made it back to First Emu Flat early morning had passed into mid-morning.

There was no time to lose. My intended camping sites were a long way from First Emu Flat, a long day's skiing with a heavy pack. I tried purple stick for my

a crest on the edge of Mt Wombargo. What should have been a glorious view was hidden by low cloud which had not cleared since the previous night's snow. But a greater disappointment awaited me. On the other side of the crest, where the road took a long sweep down towards Rocky Plains Creek, the track was uncovered. There was nothing for it but to take off my skis and walk.

The slope here faced north, whereas where I had started it had been angled more to the south and east. Even though there appeared to have been no sun



wax, but before long I was bailing up. I could not believe that this would continue all day, but I slapped on some blue stick over the top, and this seemed to work better. Very soon after passing the point where I had been forced to turn back in the car, the depth of snow decreased again. Apparently I had become stuck in a drift!

At the top of that ascent the road levelled out for quite a distance and my progress was easier, but there were places where I had to pick my route carefully to avoid grinding road gravel into the base of the skis. At other places the depth of snow was quite reasonable.

I passed Second Emu Flat and Dingo Flat and then a gentle rise brought me to

*Snow-plastered summit tops of the Cobberas Number 1 Peak and, above, a nearby campsite after a wild night! Michael Collie and Brian Walters*

since the snowfall, the slope aspect had made a great difference. As the day wore on it became noticeably warmer, or at least less cold, and snow conditions were deteriorating as I proceeded. I was confronted with the problem which faces any winter visitor to the Cobberas — difficulty of access.

The Cobberas are a clutch of rocky peaks in East Gippsland, Victoria, just south of the source of the Murray River. The highest — Number 1 Peak — is over 1,830 metres. Across the Murray to the north is The Pilot, and a ridge leading on to Mt Kosciusko. Despite their height, the Cobberas do not receive the same depth of snow as the main Alps of Victoria and New South Wales. They seem to be protected from the worst of the usual snow-laden winds



by the unbroken chain of high country to the west which stretches from Bogong through Hotham and Howitt and as far south as Baw Baw. Doubtless on some occasions when a cold moist southerly develops, a good load of snow must be dumped on these mountains; but the usual pattern is for the snow to come when the wind is still from the west or even north-west, and then most of the snow has been dumped before the Cobberas get their turn. On the few occasions when a good fall does occur, the problem is to know about it. The Cobberas are quite remote; there are no reports.

I had heard from someone passing through in the winter of 1979, which was not a good season, and all the access routes had been open. Snow lay only on the isolated higher peaks that year, and the idea of skiing there was not attractive. The bind is this: when the Cobberas do have good snow, the access routes will be blocked; when the access routes are open, the Cobberas will not have good snow.

Access is from either the east or the west. In fact it is the one road — the Black Mountain Road — which leads right through the locality, passing to the south of the Cobberas on its mountainous route from Benambra to Wulgulmerang. The western access crosses Beloka Gap near Benambra — at around 1,000 metres, a tricky enough winter prospect in itself — but later the route traverses still higher country well short of the Cobberas. Gaining winter access might be feasible at times, but at the risk of a sudden blizzard laying 40 kilometres of snow behind and between you and the nearest habitation.

The eastern access is little better in winter, but at least if one is stopped by snow, as I was, the object of the journey is still within a day's push. Indeed, it would always be risky in winter to proceed beyond First Emu Flat, which is above 1,200 metres, and one could easily be trapped if proceeding beyond the high point near Mt Wombargo at 1,425 metres. One advantage of the eastern access is that the road rises quite steadily to that high point, not with ups and downs as from the west. Furthermore, the east is the drier side of the mountains.

The prudent thing, it seemed to me, would be to choose a time when access was neither too difficult nor too easy. (Easy access would mean marginal snow and a largely wasted trip.) On this occasion, in August 1981, I found the snow feathering down to 1,100 metres.

Prudent, you say? Was it prudent to go into such an area quite alone? Perhaps not, but I had made several summer visits to these mountains, and they held a special charm for me. I knew

the area well. The idea of making a winter visit had captivated me since the first time I found the visitor's book up on the crag of Number 1 Peak and discovered no entries had been made in any year between about May and October. Travelling solo in the bush was nothing new to me, and I had done enough cross country skiing over the years not to be daunted by the prospect. Nevertheless, it was an adventure; and, like any adventure, it had an element of risk.

I had been excited by coming across such fine snow at low elevation early in



the morning, so I was naturally disappointed after crossing the spur on Mt Wombargo to find it had run out. Nevertheless, I soon overcame the feeling. I find every year, because I abandon the bush for the world of white, that by the end of the winter I am positively yearning for the real bush again; and I had been skiing since mid-June. Cross country skiing is a great sport, but I find that most of the time I am engrossed in the purely physical aspect of the exercise. In bushwalking the mind has time to ramble, and I find abundant time not only to observe but to absorb. In some sense the physical surroundings take over, and I become other than I am. Because of this, I quickly lost my disappointment at the lack of snow, and began to accept the bush and the experience for what it was. I immediately felt happier.

The forest was more open here. The snow gums were large and well-spaced. The ground was covered by a litter of dead and decaying branches, interspersed with a kind of dry grass. An icy rill cascaded alongside the track. After a few more kilometres, after cross-

ing Rocky Plains Creek, I was into the snow again and skiing. I had a late lunch on a roadside log, and enjoyed the solitude.

A little further on, a rough track (not marked on the map) led off to the north and eventually to the Playgrounds, my objective, on the other side of the Rams Head Range. The Playgrounds are a group of alpine plains lying along the head of Native Dog Creek, and nestled just below the Number 1 Peak of the Cobberas. Psychologically I felt near to my destination, but I was mistaken.

I had not been on this particular track before, although I was aware of its ex-

istence. At first it was not obvious where it penetrated the scrub in the snow but it became clearer as it developed. The snow was quite soft by now, and on steeper pinches, where it lay deep, the going became tough. I had anticipated that the track would pass straight over the saddle in the range and down to the Playgrounds. I came to a junction (or it looked like one in the snow), but the left branch appeared to peter out. The right branch, to which I committed myself, led upwards along the range. All this time the clouds were becoming heavier and it looked like snow. It did start snowing, but only for a very few minutes. I was becoming a little anxious and weary, and was all for taking a compass bearing and bashing down through the bush but thought better of it. I expected that at every turn the track would veer off and head down in the direction I felt it should be taking. Instead it continued indefinitely up and along the ridge. When it started to steepen, I began swearing to myself and cursing the silly fellows who had put the track where it was in the first place.

By the time I reached the top it was

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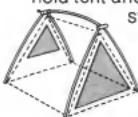
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after three, and I knew I would need to pitch my tent by five. That it was the top there could be no doubt, for it plunged down precipitously on the other side. Again I lost the snow on the north-facing slope and had to walk. Again there should have been a fine view, but there were no views to be had this day. As I clattered down the rocky track I surprised a couple of brumbies, which looked to be in quite good condition as they galloped off.

Down on the snow grass of the Playgrounds there was snow cover again though, for the most part, not enough to ski on. I decided that I would plod on regardless and not worry about putting skis on and off. At the main campsite in the valley I came upon a couple of kangaroos, which took to the hills, but the campsite was too waterlogged to consider. I determined to push on so that I would be closer to the mountain next morning. There was some difficulty



in getting across the swollen creek, which was flowing very deep and fast, but after a time I found a place narrow enough to jump. In any case, my boots were saturated from tramping the boggy ground.

At last I could see my mountain, quite near and just visible beneath the lowering clouds. As I emerged from a clump of snow gums, I saw a group of five brumbies about 100 metres away. I stopped, and for some time we stood inspecting each other. Then at some unseen signal they turned in unison, their manes streaming, as they wheeled away into the scrub towards the heart of the mountain. A startling image was vividly imprinted on my mind in that bleak landscape, the epitome of bold liberty, an image I carried with me when I left their mountainside.

I paused before moving on, but then found that the place from where they had watched me would make a reasonable campsite, although a little exposed. There was a small patch of clear ground beside a stream, firm enough and not at all rocky. After pitching the tent I forced myself to go on up the valley, trying to spy out the best

## Solo

• GOING SKI TOURING NEXT WEEK ...  
'Oh yeah, who with?' 'No one. I'm going on my own.'

Disapproving looks from the experienced fellow-tourers and puzzlement from others are the most common responses to this conversation — one I've had many times.

Not that I choose to go alone, although solo touring has its delights. Rather, I make a virtue of necessity, having recently become the father of one darling daughter.

And living in the age of feminism, sharing the child care is an unspoken assumption.

That makes for difficulties, finding companions with exactly the same (limited) holidays. Particularly if the holiday has to be constructed around a week-end when my mum can mind Ilse.

Perhaps the worst part of going solo is the heavy rucksack with an unsharable snow tent, stove, cooking gear and healthy margin of spare food.

And there are problems of safety. Like the time I was tearing out dry, brittle wood half-way up a snow gum and slipped with a freshly-broken branch grazing my groin. Or when climbing the gradually steepening slope of icy snow behind Alpina Lodge near Kosciusko — once committed there was only one way out:

Both could have resulted in a nasty, though not fatal, accident. I console myself that it could just as easily have occurred in a party of six, and, on both occasions, there were other skiers nearby. (Well, that's my security blanket anyway.)

But consider the advantages of going solo; you can rise when you like, and neither stop for slower members of the party nor hurry to catch up with speed maniacs. You are also forced to meet and mix with other skiers whose paths cross yours. Most difficult adjustment comes with the encroaching loneliness of night and you discover that forgotten childhood fears of the dark are alive and well.

Once, at the Tin Mine Huts in the glorious

line of attack for the next day, but when it started snowing I beat a hasty retreat.

After a pleasant night and feeling well rested, I tackled the mountain early in the morning. I plunged straight into it from my camp. It had snowed a little overnight, so although it was somewhat icy in the trees it was quite good going on skis. The undergrowth on this mountainside can make it tough walking in parts, but with the snow cover the low growth was laid flat. The higher you go the steeper the mountain becomes, but I made reasonable progress because the snow was also becoming colder, deeper and finer as I ascended. At the top is a sheer outcrop of rock where it was necessary to pick a path carefully. Just as I crested the top, I swear, the sun came out for the first time on the whole trip. I could see the Playgrounds clearly, 500 metres below me. Edging round the rocky monoliths at the top I could see the twin spires of Cleft Peak outlined sharply against a blue sky, with a foreground of brilliant white sparkling in the sun. Further round was Moscow Peak, and beyond it and just visible through the receding cloud, Number 2 Peak. I had seen all this many times in summer, but it never looked so free and so wild. It was a wonderland. The shining peaks thrust themselves up aggressively from the clouds. They were

season of 1981, having skied the whole way from Cascade Hut, I was settling down for a night of solitude when a Landcruiser of trendy downhillers from Jindabyne, 'but for the day', drew up outside. Solitude shattered. (But they did have a cask of white.)

Me, with a head full of alpine ashes, wild horses and physical tiredness after two days of solid slog from Dead Horse Gap. Them, with apres-ski chatter, having discovered a weirdo skier miles from anywhere.

We chatted politely.

I was left to the smoking fire with a warm after-taste of wine. Readjusting to the solitude after such a bizarre interlude was unnerving.

It may sound hopelessly romantic but there's an exciting beauty about crashing through the icy dawn toward Mt Townsend as the sky turns slowly from purple to pink — and being utterly and completely alone, a speck on a broad white saddle.

What is the appeal?

Being alone means being silent. Being silent means being more aware of the sounds of the mountains. Chatting with touring comrades can sometimes mean never really leaving the city, work, or the superficial mateyness of males.

And, to be honest, there is a certain dangerous thrill going solo. Everything has an edge to it, from route finding, picking your way along a wind-blown ridge, to huddling over the choofer at night. Not that I, or any solo tourer, would court disaster: there may be an extra thrill, but there's also extra caution.

Many's the extra hour's touring that has been forgone, or the tricky route finding avoided, for want of companions to bolster confidence or provide a safety net.

Enjoying the solitary vice can be fun, but cross country touring, like many other sports, is best done in groups, or at least pairs. ■

David McKnight

enchantingly rugged, deceptively peaceful in their gentle mantle of snow.

The snow on the top was magnificent. As I took off on a long gentle run in the direction of Cleft Peak, the fine-grained snow showered off on either side. The experience was so exhilarating that when I came to the edge of a steeper drop to a saddle below, I had to restrain a powerful impulse to continue without a thought and ski endlessly through the magic wilderness spread out ahead. I had to go back then, of course; but I will return one day to live out that fantasy.

I stayed awhile to have a snack and drink in the view before starting down. At first it was much quicker going down as I telemarked (in my fashion) in and out of trees, but the trees became too thick for that further down and I had to pick my way more stolidly. The snow had softened, too. By the time I packed my tent and headed out, it was almost midday.

The return trip was fairly uneventful. I had to walk further going out, because the snow was on the wane. It was sunny now. On the spur below Mt Wombargo I looked back, and was rewarded with a splendid panorama of snow-clad Number 1 Peak and Cleft Peak. They shone brilliantly in the sunlight against the darker shaded ridges in the foreground. ■



Colin



# Monteath

*Adelie penguins on Paulet Island and, right, gentoo penguin and chick. All photos are taken in Antarctica.*



Opposite, an adelle penguin chick, a little down in the mouth, on Pautet Island. Above, Trinity Island and, left, seal on Nelson Island.



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Mt Arapiles  
Mecca of  
Australian  
rockclimbing  
by Chris Baxter

# The Best Cliff in the World?

• LIKE MOST CLIMBERS, I'D HEARD A LOT about Mt Arapiles before I saw it and, in my case, it wasn't long between hearing and seeing. Quite the contrary.

One starry February night in 1965, climbing impresario Peter Jackson stopped our two-car Volkswagen convoy on a deserted road near Horsham in western Victoria. Even from 30 kilometres, and at midnight, it was obvious that this was no ordinary cliff. The long, whale-like bulk of Mt Arapiles dominated an otherwise completely flat landscape. It shone in the pale moonlight. My boyish imagination ran riot; two decades later the place has a similar effect on me. To climbers, Mt Arapiles is like that.

Approached in daylight, Arapiles' vertical hectares seem to dance in the heat haze above endless yellow-brown Wimmera wheat fields. Not that it's always hot at Arapiles, it's just that it seems that way. Perhaps it's the fiery reds and yellows of the rock.

Closer inspection fails to reveal the spectacular, clean-chiselled features you might expect of the cliff described in the renowned international climbing magazine, *Mountain*, as 'quite simply, the finest cliff in the world'. Rather, it resembles a decaying monster or, as one pundit put it even less romantically, 'a giant pile of cow dung'.

Arapiles is not a cliff, it is scores of cliffs, their aspect, size and height varying as much as the types and styles of climbing. There are countless pinnacles, buttresses, terraces and shady recesses. Hundreds of the climbs are not visible when facing the two-kilometre long line of cliffs.

Mt Arapiles is equally the preserve of beginners and those aspiring to the hardest climbs in the Southern hemisphere. There are climbs ranging from 'boulder problems' to 150 metres. Cracks, slabs, chimneys, walls, roofs — they're all there in profusion.

Amazingly, this year is only the twenty-first anniversary of rockclimbing at Arapiles. In September 1963 father and son climbing team Bob and Steve Craddock decided to investigate a small outcrop near Horsham that they'd seen pictured in a tourist pamphlet. Mitre Rock was a good find, but they were not prepared for Mt Arapiles directly opposite. At that time there were only some 40 climbs in the whole of Victoria.

Something of the low-key, timorous nature of the climbing scene of the day is indicated by the fact that it took four visits by climbers before the first routes were attempted! Introductory Route (grade 4) and Siren (7) were the first climbs.

Twenty years later Mike Law wrote: 'Arapiles is the cliff you've dreamed of or imagined every time you've been gripped elsewhere. The rock, protection and Nic Taylor performing for the masses on *A Taste of Honey* (grade 21) during an ABC telecast. Andrew Thomson watches slack-jawed. Right, the "old wave" at Mt Arapiles in 1965; Peter Jackson (left), Ted Batt, John Fahey, Bob Bull and Reg Williams. All uncredited photos Baxter'

moves, even many of the climbs, are perfect.'

Climbers immediately recognized the quality of Arapiles. Consequently the popularity of the place, and the number of climbs there, have grown enormously.

Ease of access ('You can belay from your car's bumper bar', bubbled Peter Jackson in an 'Arapiles Special' issue of the Victorian Climbing Club's newsletter shortly after the 'discovery' of the area) was a powerful attraction for notoriously foot-shy climbers. A warm, dry climate and rock that is colourful, friendly and as warm

take furniture vans bulging with its members to Arapiles for the traditional pig-roast and camp fire sing-song. Many of them were not regular climbers; they included walkers, naturalists and mountain lovers for whom the area has long held considerable attractions. The emphasis of the celebrations may have changed somewhat over the years but the numbers arriving, at that and similar holiday periods, have continued to increase dramatically.

Naturally such popularity is reflected in both the number of climbs and their



as the climate quickly won the hearts of climbers. But it is the rock itself that makes them wax lyrical; the orange quartzite sandstone is steep, sound and varied; climbing on it is an intensely sensual experience. Bulging and rippling in the fierce sun, it provides dramatic and unpredictable climbing. Holds and protection turn up where least expected; holds are often concealed until you climb on to them. It's impossible not to feel the rock was created specifically for climbing. It gives every climber a taste of immortality.

Others are drawn to Arapiles by the conviviality of the scene, still the exception rather than the rule in Australian climbing areas.

Most Victorian climbers are initiated in the art of climbing at Arapiles. They shake and lurch their way up the time-honoured and hold-strewn classics of the section known as the Organ Pipes. Already, for example, holds on routes such as Diapason and D Minor have become polished by thousands of sweaty hands and shuffling feet.

The Queen's Birthday long week-end, in June, has become something of an institution. In the 1960s the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club used to

difficulty. This is shown in the accompanying table of existing climbs at the time of publication of each of the six climbing guide books to Mt Arapiles.

Year	Guide book authors	Total number of climbs at Mt Arapiles	Grade of climb
1964	B & S Craddock	15	12
1965	I Speedie & M Stone	108	18
1969	C Baxter	288	19
1978	K Lockwood	540	24
1980	C Baxter & H Foxcroft	866	27
1983	K Carrigan	1,300	29

If anything, the pace of development is quickening. For example, while preparing this article over Easter 1984 I added seven new routes. The number of climbs in the area is now approaching 1,500 and the hardest is a grade 30 effort by Kim Carrigan, completed after 12 days of intense effort. Scores of other new climbs are currently under siege.

Since its discovery by climbers, Arapiles has been at the cutting edge of advancing standards of Victorian and, more recently, Australian climbing. Indeed, the reliability and security of the rock, not to mention its seemingly endless potential for increasingly futuristic climbs, have encouraged standards of difficulty as advanced as anywhere in the world.

Arapiles has fired the confidence of Australian climbing. There has been a metamorphosis of attitude. In the 1960s we didn't think our standards were within a bull's roar of those of the rest of the world, and they weren't. The current new confidence, even arrogance, dares to wonder if the reverse is now true.

Until the mid 1970s Australian climbing was a product of the 'Dark Ages'. There was little contact even between States, let alone with overseas climbing. Australian climbing was an anachronistic backwater. A single visitor, American climber Henry

sufficient. Australian climbing developed a scene centred on the campsite under Mt Arapiles' plantation of balding pines. Generally unemployed and usually dole-supported, climbers spent weeks at a time in the heat and dust, pushing the standards. Competition intensified. Hard training, particularly on the many 'boulder problems' of the area, became the order of the day. The quantum advances of what was thought possible drew more climbers into the activity. Increasingly they came from interstate and overseas.

Today there are always a dozen or more

to the view that recent routes are not only substantially harder than those preceding them but they are generally better routes. Climbers seem to have realized that a rock cleft visible for kilometres does not guarantee good climbing. Likewise, having to climb a hundred metres of choss for a body-length of technical climbing does not make a route a classic. Having climbed at Arapiles in both the 1960s and 1980s I have to conclude that I side with contemporary opinion on this matter.

Certainly, climbers' antics are absurd. The results are so puny and their status so transitory as to be out of all proportion to the often extreme, mental and physical effort invested in them. The futility of man's attempts at glory are axiomatic, and those attempts in the climbing arena are no exception. The timeless antiquity of Arapiles will be unchanged long after the last 'fleas' have given up inflating their chests on her flanks.

Whilst questionable tactics are scarcely the preserve of contemporary climbers, today's competition for a dwindling store of unclimbed rock (and the fact that these new climbs are getting harder) have resulted in the wholesale adoption of tactics which are not improving the climbing experience. The use of chalk is now almost universal. It does not improve the quality of the climbs, but the problems its use creates may have been overrated.



The Bluffs section of Mt Arapiles from the Pines. Right, three leading Arapiles climbers of the 1960s pictured in 1967 with equipment of the day; Philip Stranger (left), Chris Dewhurst and Peter Jackson. Opposite, a modern climber Lincoln Shepherd, shows the style of contemporary climbing on an uncompleted route on the aptly named Henry Bolte wall. Final photo Kim Carrigan

Barber, changed all that. He blitzed the Australian rock, concentrating on doing routes previously climbed only by resort to 'artificial aid'. Nowhere was his impact greater than at Arapiles where he did many 'first free ascents' of routes such as Squeaky (22), A Taste of Honey (21), Pebbles (22), Red Baron (23), Kama Sutra (23) and a host of others. In the course of this onslaught Barber introduced the grade of 23 to Australian climbing.

When the chalk dust had settled, local climbers came out of the woodwork with a new resolve. Many of the 'old guard' quietly faded from the scene, leaving the work to the likes of new 'names' such as Chris Peisker, Nic Taylor, Greg Child, Andrew Thomson, Kevin Lindorff and Glenn Tempest. With the exception of Australia's first grade 24 climb (at Victoria's Mt Buffalo) every subsequent advance in the grading of Australia's hardest climbs has been at Arapiles.

Week-end climbing was no longer

climbers (including overseas visitors) in permanent residence at 'the Pines'. At week-ends this number swells to 60 or so, and at long week-ends to many times more. (Last Easter climbers were there in unprecedented numbers, perhaps there were 1,000 of them!) This is a far cry from the days when there was little or no mid-week climbing, and even at week-ends loneliness and boredom were problems as a solitary car-load of us rattled about with the entire area to ourselves.

Seldom ones to underestimate the importance of their own achievements or to consider the potential of the future, climbers have regularly been pronouncing Arapiles 'climbed out' since the mid-1960s. Then, for example, John Moore wrote: 'The era of doing three or four new routes in a week-end is definitely closed, there is only the mopping up to be accomplished'. In the 1978 guide book we were similarly informed: '... you can rest assured that all of the Mount's grand routes are in this guide'. The author went on to describe many of the recent inclusions in his guide as 'absolutely worthless attempts at glory' and that 'most (routes put up since 1973) were eminently forgettable! Over 1,000 'absolutely worthless attempts at glory' later, opinion seems to have swung heavily



More serious is the tendency to 'prepare' new routes from above prior to climbing them. This commonly involves close inspection (including practise from a rope), cleaning (including intensive wire-brushing) and pre-placing 'fixed' wires, pitons and bolts (in artificially drilled holes) for protection where the possibilities for more 'natural' protection are deemed to be inadequate. Astoundingly, there is even a case of holds being created by both chipping and glueing!

Naturally some of these activities, particularly bolting, permanently alter the nature of the rock, and there is a case for strongly discouraging all such activities. The ready acceptance of these 'tricks of



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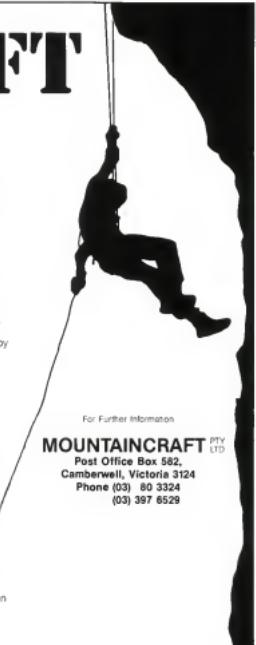
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the trade' and also of dubious efforts whilst on a lead (such as of placing protection while hanging from a lower runner and other 'trickery') are perhaps taking tolerance too far. Certainly Arapiles climbing has set no example of climbing ethics.

In 1978 Kim Carrigan turned to Mt Arapiles with a resolve, and results, unequalled to this day. His first free ascent of the enormous ceiling of Procol Harum, Australia's first climb graded 26, was a huge psychological breakthrough. (Having



Henry Barber on the first free ascent of Pebbles (22).

done the first ascent of the climb 12 years previously, with extensive aid of course, I was indiscreet enough to find myself quoted in *Mountain* magazine proclaiming that I would eat my underpants should Procol Harum ever go free!)

That was only the start of Carrigan's onslaught and my new diet! He freed numerous aid routes, including Anxiety Neurosis (26) — actually an uncompleted aid route — Fox on a Hot Thin Roof (27) and Yesterday (27). His new routes Picking Winners (27), India (29) and Masada (30, 1984) were the first routes of their respective grades in Australia. (Yesterday and Fox on a Hot Thin Roof were the first 28s but were subsequently downgraded.)

Such a dominance of Australian climbing exceeds even John Ewbank's reign in the 1960s. In fact, in 1981 and 1982 Mark Moorhead (tragically killed in the Himalayas last year) may have surpassed Carrigan's efforts. His hideous crack climb at Arapiles, Cobwebs, is now recognized as Australia's first 28. Some of his 26s, such as Down to Zero, London

## Lessons in Levitation

• I'M NOT SURE WHERE I FIRST HEARD ABOUT rockclimbing, in a *National Geographic* article, maybe *Women's Weekly* — 'Australia's Climbing Men Soar to New Heights' — or *Wild*. A number of my friends had been habitually disappearing on Friday nights to go 'climbing at Araps'. They would return on Sunday nights, occasionally with war wounds and always with stories of desperate manoeuvres on the crux of . . . , or tales of friends lost on such and such a climb. I don't exactly make a habit of abandoning friends, but all they were concerned about was the expense!

It began as a typical Friday — slept in, burnt the toast, a little late for work, the same tepid coffee for morning tea and deep-fried fish for lunch. I've always considered it important to have good wholesome food before embarking on energetic activity. Friday afternoon it began to rain. Friday night it was still raining. A reprieve? No such luck. Saturday morning brought with it a beautiful sunrise, the beginning of a pleasantly warm day.

We started on an easy climb — Diapson — a beginner's classic. Brian led. As if he were out for an afternoon stroll he sauntered up the first pitch and out of sight. All I could see was the rope, attached to me, disappearing up the cliff. Some time later he yelled,

'You're on belay.'

'Huh.'

'Climb when ready.'

'Oh great.'

Apparently these gibberish calls intimately

concerned our safety. 'On belay' meant that Brian was safely tied to a rock and able to give me a tight rope if I happened to slip.

With the courage of a mouse and dexterity of a bag of potatoes I began to climb. I'd been told that this was an easy angled cliff, with handholds and footholds big enough to dance on. Furthermore, even a grandmother had climbed this route. Well it was not my idea of 'easy angled', and you could forget about the dancing.

The first three or four metres were fine. Then I realized how high up I was and firmly embraced the rock. If my feet slipped at least I'd be holding something. 'Ah-hah' cried an observer from ground level. 'First rule in climbing — use your feet. And remember, you're climbing, not pulling yourself up.' Timidly I raised my foot to a hidden step and shifted my weight to it. Bells did not chime nor trumpets sound, but I was a wee bit higher and I could grab a lovely big hold.

A few more moves and I was up the first pitch. Relief was short-lived. There was the second pitch, steeper than the first, then the third pitch, a chimney before the fourth and final pitch to the top.

What joy it was to reach the summit. After all the complaints and whingeing, rockclimbing was fun! I looked across the Wimmera plains, more beautiful than ever. Flat and featureless as far as the eye could see, flourishing with spring's first buds of wheat, there must have placidly observed countless climbers struggle up their first climb. •

Philippe Lohmeyer

Calling and Shadows and Light have been repeated rarely, if at all. Similarly, Chris Shepherd reached a high standard with his Exodus II (27), climbed in 1982. It must be acknowledged, however, that while there is currently plenty of activity in the 24-26 range, Carrigan seems, once again, to have moved out from the mob.

What of the future? To be sure it will be a very long time before Arapiles ceases to be, for some people, one of the most beautiful places on earth. Her charm and mellow beauty are almost mystical, and many are willingly ensnared. Sadly, however, natural beauty is a fragile and often transient endowment, and I know of no place being 'loved to death' so rapidly and surely as Arapiles.

The campsite has been described, with reason, as 'an ecological disaster area'. Vegetation is disappearing at a dramatic rate. Dust (or mud) replaces the grass, the undergrowth is long gone and the trees fast dying, their lower branches stripped for firewood and the soil over their roots compacted by the passage of countless cars.

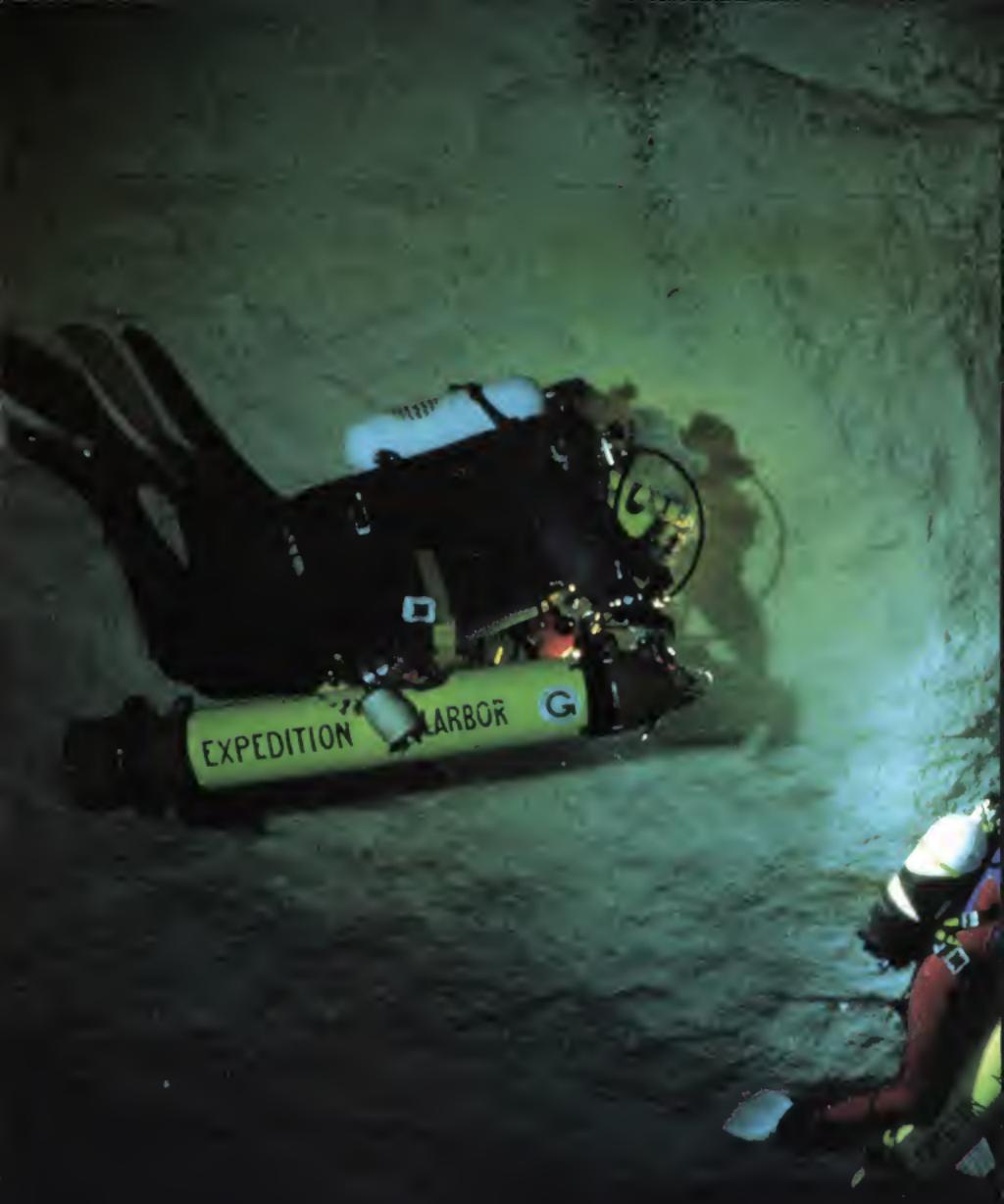
At the cliff there has been substantial regrowth since the disastrous 1972 fire, but near popular climbs, such as those in the Organ Pipes, vegetation has vanished and soil erosion set in. Broken rock and shrubs are widespread and the wildlife is being driven out. Certainly the nankeen kestrels which inhabited the cliffs have all but disappeared. Even the stumpy-tail lizards seem less common.

It was necessary to build public lavatories at the Pines over a decade ago,

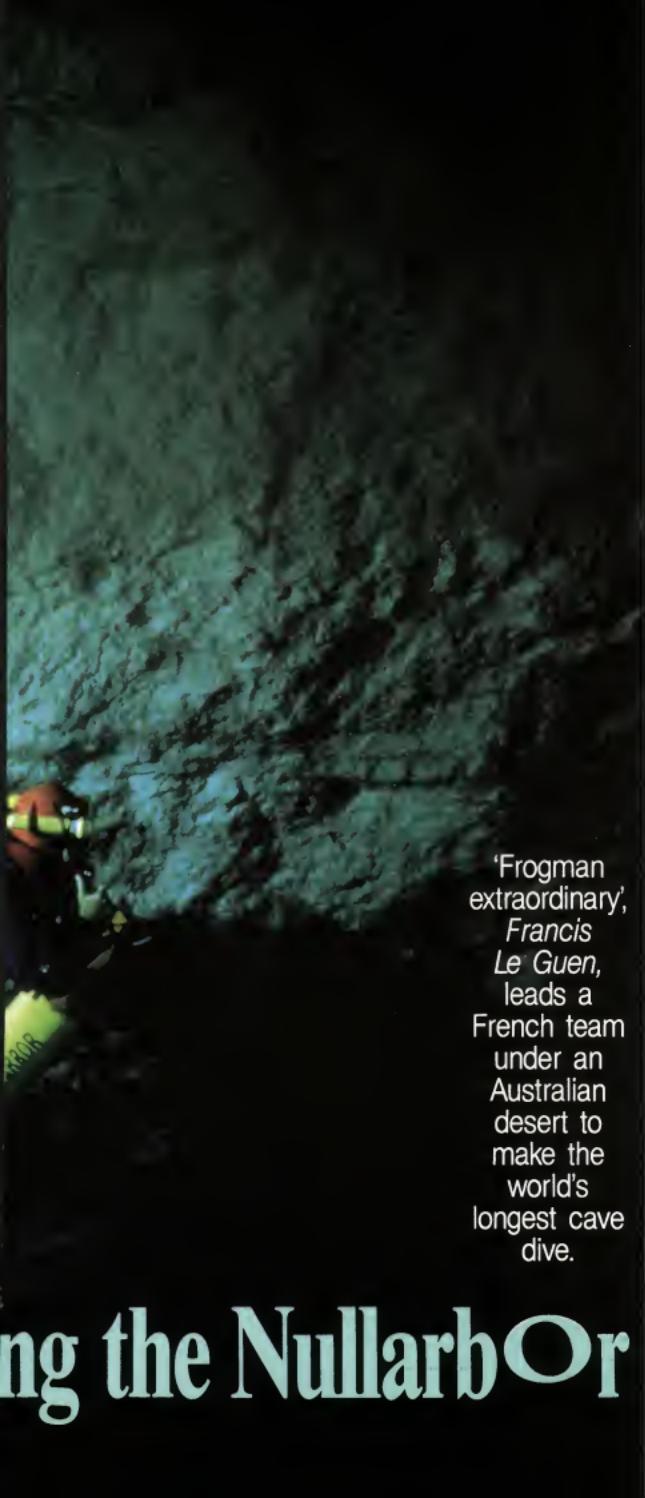
but this was done without any apparent regard to aesthetic considerations. Apart from a completely unnecessary rebuilding of the picnic shelter shed, the Forests Commission of Victoria's management appears to have achieved little in the area, especially with regard to protecting it from further damage, a state of affairs that has become particularly noticeable since it has been known that the area is to come under the management of the National Parks Service. It will be necessary to move fast to halt the damage. As a first step, all vehicle traffic should at once be forbidden access to any area beyond the immediate vicinity of the toilets.

Almost overnight, it seems, Arapiles climbing has changed from an intimate experience in which everyone knew everyone else to a very public elbow-rubbing with strangers. With this anonymity have come the inevitable consequences of alienation, theft, litter and excessive noise. At Easter 1984 police were called to the area for the first time by climbers complaining about the behaviour of other climbers. Bureaucratic interference will necessarily increase.

Perhaps sensing the end of an era, there is a movement by some climbers to acquire property at nearby Natimuk. Others seem bent on putting an end to it all by their apathy, even outright vandalism. The birthplace of contemporary Australian climbing is indeed in dire straits: it is time for climbers to put into practice the tried and true war cry of conservationists all over the world — act now before it is too late. •



Divi



● A HAND APPEARS IN THE BEAM OF LIGHT in front of my eyes. Two fingers form a 'V'. It is 15 September 1983, we are in Cocklebiddy Cave beneath the Nullarbor Plain, Western Australia. If I could smile I would — we have just broken the world record for the longest underground dive.

We are French speleonauts, each of us a speleologist and diver. My brother Eric, a 24-year-old composer-pianist, Veronique Borel, a 27-year-old administrative assistant, Sylvie Goutiere, an 18-year-old student, Jerome Krowicki, a 23-year-old designer, and myself, a 27-year-old journalist and photographer.

What makes our success extraordinary is that the sump we explored had already been attempted by Australians.

The entrance in the Nullarbor had been charted in 1900 as a source of water. The



first descents were made in 1972 (100 metres explored) and in 1974 (500 metres). Then, in 1976, the first sump was conquered (one kilometre).

The Australians, who looked upon Cocklebiddy as the 'Everest' of sumps, launched a grand expedition in 1979: nine speleonauts, 58 bottles and three compressors. They managed to go three kilometres, setting a world record. Then, in September 1982, they reached the brink of the third sump (over four kilometres) but could go no further.

In September 1983 we take up the challenge.

The Nullarbor Plain is a desert, but also an immense — 250,000 square kilometre — karstic region, one of the world's largest. This big limestone layer, over 500 metres thick, is partly covered by sand in the north and submerged by the Indian Ocean in the south.

The remaining intermediate zone has evolved into a subterranean system of flooded grottos. Fossils formed in rock beneath the water have lain dormant for millions of years.

A drowned grotto or sump is a submerged cave. During their formation, grottos are especially valuable for geological study. This Australian example was flooded after its formation at sea level. Some sumps develop close to the

'Motoring' through the limpid waters of the 30 metre wide second sump. Above, the entrance to Cocklebiddy Cave. All photos Francis Le Guen

‘Frogman extraordinary’,  
Francis  
Le Guen,  
leads a  
French team  
under an  
Australian  
desert to  
make the  
world’s  
longest cave  
dive.  
  
ng the NullarbOr

surface and contain pockets of air, but there are others deep below the water level, with flooded galleries that take the speleonaut to incredible depths, as at the Fontaine de Vaucluse in France (153 metres deep).

Few people are sufficiently impassioned to practise subterranean diving in its purest form. Only a handful, world wide, attempt to conquer this ultimate human challenge.

This is exploration in its strictest sense, in a particularly hostile environment. The diver, trapped in a tunnel, is prey to constant stress; his only way out is back where he came from. Such conditions mean that supplies of air bottles and valves must be duplicated and lighting provisions tripled.

Subterranean waters are usually glacial, often opaque, forcing speleonauts to make their way gingerly along an 'Ariane's web' that links them to the surface. To get through a tight squeeze speleonauts are often obliged to take off their diving suits. During a descent these elements intensify the dizzying atmosphere of the depths.

To dive below the earth for hours, to straddle a 'motorcycle' in flooded tunnels — it all sounds unreal, but fiction becomes reality for us under the Nullarbor.

We've done some preliminary coastal dives between Melbourne and Adelaide to test equipment and train in conditions akin to those in Cocklebiddy Cave before we confront the Nullarbor.

We start out on the long road from Adelaide to Perth: hundreds of kilometres of straight road, then a rocky road through the saltbush leading to the famous grotto.



Francis helps his brother remove equipment weighing over 150 kilograms. Left, some feminine charm lights up the depths. Opposite page, the lake bottom is visible 15 metres beneath the surface.



Our vehicle is a Mercedes Unimog: four giant wheels support the five of us with our three tonnes of equipment, a tonne of food, and half a tonne of water.

In this immense flat land, the grotto appears suddenly — a depression in the earth measuring 200 metres by 50 metres, a great hole, frequented by birds of prey.

We pitch our tents and store our food in a neighbouring cave — kangaroos, foxes,

rabbits and lizards quickly gather, even snakes glide in. At night, we are treated to a fascinating horror show: giant spiders fix us with their enormous red eyes right out of some weird nightmare. Nights are cold, 5°, but days are hot at 40°. And that is in winter, which we chose because during the summer the thermometer can hit 65°!

A 100 metre rock slide leads to a

subterranean lake 300 metres across. The first sump starts with this lake. We install a cable-car to carry equipment to the water's edge.

Eric is the first to go down, with promising results; after 39 hours, he reaches the famous third sump, beating the Australian record. He resurfaces from his solitary mission exhausted and happy. We decide to try for 'the big one'.

We use the methods of a Himalayan expedition: 'back-up' divers transport bottles used by the front-line divers as they make their way to the unknown. After performing this hard task, Veronique and Sylvie rest up in the first of the underground chambers, swimming in warm, crystal-clear water.

They carry the equipment through a kilometre of briny sump, an hour of exhausting work. Eric and I pass them, crouched (when we can) on 'submarine scooters', motorbikes that save time, and precious air.

The four of us meet up behind the first sump where we have to take off all our equipment in order to negotiate a particularly difficult 20 metres of fallen rock. Going back and forth, removing and



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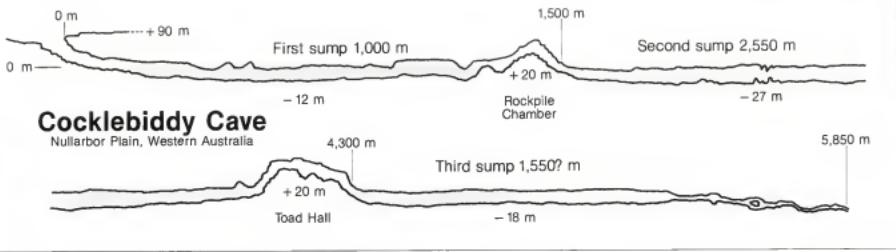


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putting on the diving suits, takes ten hours.

An immense clear lake greets us at the entrance of the second sump. Then there's a catastrophe: Eric falls from his scooter, breaking the starting mechanism. We manage to repair it hastily, hoping it will hold up during the diving.

Buried under diving suits that weigh over 150 kilograms, Eric and I disappear for a long journey.

This second sump, 2,550 metres long, is unique. It is more than 30 metres wide and the waters are so clear that one can follow the motions of a diver 100 metres ahead. It's a scene for a science fiction film: air-bubbles create a myriad mirrors, reflecting light and shadows in a blue-green haze. To save on light, Eric and I decide to take turns leading, the other following in the dark.

After an hour and 50 minutes spent in the hubbub of our underwater engines, it's back to the surface. This is a new chamber where we can breathe normally. We have to reorganize all our equipment again before continuing to the third sump. Exhausted, we take a quick break, eat, put on thermal suits and lie down on our waterproof clothing on the sloping ground.

We awake after four hours of sleep, in complete darkness. The candles have gone out and for a moment we realize how far we are from any rescue. I manage to relight our diving lamp and illuminate some of our rocky bedroom. Looking up, I spot a piece of bright rock that seems on the verge of falling, but perhaps it's been that way for 1,000 years? There is no feeling

the dimensions of the gallery are smaller. These waters have stayed dormant for centuries. Unluckily, the passage becomes narrower, and after 1,550 metres I can go no further; the grotto continues, but no human can get by. I have four hours left on my own, so in search of a solution I explore several branches, but there is no way through . . .

Suddenly, one of my flippers picks up some ancient sedimentation, gilded, and I make my way through a golden trail that no human has ever navigated. But I come

Exhausted, we return to the second sump and mount our submarine scooters for a two-hour watery race. As we reach the first dry chamber hallucinations, caused by exhaustion, overcome us. Convinced that I have lost a lamp, I begin digging up rocks before I find it on my arm. Eric complains that his lamp has a bad connection and I see him holding on to a burnt-out candle. Luckily Jerome comes to meet us with food and helps us resurface.

I am carrying plenty of batteries for the scooter, but I myself am at a low ebb; I



*Jerome (left), Veronique, Francis, Sylvie and Eric.*

fall . . . and fall asleep! The others find me stretched out like a dead man, but snoring! The scooters are flooded with lake water but suddenly start up all by themselves!

With Jerome in tow, we make it through the last 1,000 metres of these watery catacombs, risking multiple collisions all the way, completing a 47-hour expedition.

16 September 1983. 10 am. We have resurfaced to the sun — and the flies. Resting on pillows, our swollen eyes review, in slow motion, the film of the longest sump in the world, the film of a new world record. An extraordinary experience that we sought somewhere in the Australian desert. And we found it! •

## We realize how far we are from any rescue.

of time in this special space we are in. Once again, we prepare our equipment and make ten trips carrying 400 metres across fallen rock to the third sump.

This time, it is my turn to try a solitary dive while Eric waits three and one-half hours. I carry two kilometres of 'Arlane's web' at my waist, linking us to the outside world.

As I go, I place the bottles for the return trip on the line. The water is still clear but

back to reality when I see the dark mummies of bats, lying on a table of crystal. They may have flown in some time in antiquity, in the days when this was a peaceful river.

So I have only come in second, after this little vampire family, but I still beat a world record!

During the long decompression period my brother makes signs — victory! Now we have to make our way back along the rocky path, risking a dangerous fall. We leave a symbolic candle burning on the threshold of the third sump.



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# Walking Through Time

The Australian bush wins an English enthusiast; by Sue Mathews.

• I HAVE JUST MADE AN AMAZING discovery — that Australia is not a bit like England. I have been here less than a month and my thoughts and impressions would fill several not-so-slim volumes. The most cogent reaction I have had is that I was expecting some form of diluted Englishness, crumpets with Fosters or Harrods with an Australian accent. Not a bit of it. The energy, enthusiasms and virility of this place is decidedly un-English. I suppose there are vestigial traces of a European culture, but if so it is in uniquely Australian form, most certainly not a watered-down version.

The essence of the Australianism of this powerful land hit me (and that is exactly the word for it) when I went walking (on a commercially-organized trip) in the Ben Boyd National Park in New South Wales. In five days I experienced that dimension of Australia which will be forever completely alien to Europe, not because we have lost it because it was never European, but because 'it' is that powerful evocation of 'spirit of place' (to use Lawrence Durrell's magic phrase), the all-pervading sense of the age and energy of the land and the authority of the elements.

This has absolutely nothing to do with buildings or people, but a lot to do with the changing configurations of land, sky and sea. It is not enough to say the sea was blue and so was the sky sometimes, and that the trees swept down to the sandy beaches or the rocky shoreline, because this happens with much beauty or grandeur in places other than Australia. The something different about Australia, to me, lay in the vastness of those skies, the deepest turquoise of the sea over sand, the sharp clefts in the rocks which the sea, so mindlessly relentless, pounded, and the imperturbable endlessness of cliff-top heaths and forests.

The animals, birds and marine life



*Ben Boyd residence. (Ben Boyd National Park.) Photos Steve Colman collection*

emphasized the freedom of the land. I ate oysters, sitting on the red rocks off which they had been prised. I admired blue starfish and crabs with purple claws. And under my hand I felt the different feel of the land. The kangaroos browsing at dawn and dusk, a leaping dolphin, the tumbling rosellas, the smell of the vegetation under a hot sun — all underlined the uniqueness of this land. It needs a Hardy to project these feelings from a European viewpoint — I have only my wonder to guide me.

The walking was sometimes hard (because of the wind), but never strenuously so. The purpose of this walk was to see the littoral and all it contained.

We walked no more than ten kilometres each day. We had plenty of time to stand and stare, at kangaroos staring at us, at rock pools full of mysterious life, at the startling cliffs and multicoloured caves which made up some of the coast. Sometimes we walked in silence each with his or her own thoughts. Other times, and frequently, there was much laughing and silliness, sometimes talk about other worlds and concerns a million miles away.

The camps were comfortable, with wonderfully easy-to-erect tents, good food and even wine. We were all adults whose disparate interests could, within reason, be accommodated within the group. An easy-going, non-obtrusive camaraderie developed, dispelling any fear I might have



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'We had plenty of time to stand and stare . . .' (Ben Boyd National Park)

had of spending five days with uncongenial people.

We camped early enough each day (twice in National Parks campsites — whose attraction to me was an almost proper lavatory, nick-named the 'bomb drop', other more primitive facilities being 'trowel jobs' — and once on a beach site) to allow sufficient time before the evening meal for each of us to do 'our own thing'. Some went fishing and actually caught fish, others read, some snorkelled or paddled about in inflatable canoes, others swam and sunbathed. I went off on solitary walks along the coastline, relishing the unique experience of being quite alone on wide, empty beaches. Many years ago an Australian told me that in Australia the beaches squeaked — I derided her fantasy. As I walked each day I kept thinking about the squeaking beaches and reminding myself to apologise to my friend when I saw her in Sydney.

We actually walked no further than from just below the Boyd Tower (in the Ben Boyd Park) to the Green Cape Lighthouse — about 30 kilometres. In other measurements we walked away from the twentieth century, people and all civilization into another time and place where measurements are on a different scale: the time it takes for a wave to break, for kangaroos to bound away, to cross a

creek — these became the scale of our new-found time.

This walk encapsulated the innate difference between Australia and England. The sense of age, in the land which I know and love so well in England, has another texture — it is more to do with history, the passage of man through time and the land. In England much of that is being lost

because of casual destruction by our civilization. Here the presence of man has made little impact on most of the land. Here the land still has both power and authority over man. Here is age, space, light and emptiness which together I found to be an unparalleled experience. I want to come back here . . . to see more of this magic. ●

## Ben Boyd National Park Information

• STRETCHING FOR NEARLY 100 KILOMETRES ALONG Victoria's coast from Sydenham Inlet to the New South Wales border, Croajingolong National Park is about equal distance from Melbourne and Sydney. It adjoins the Nardoo Nature Reserve across the border.

While the Park has excellent potential for multi-day walks, there are also many attractions for families and individuals who prefer to establish a base camp from which day walks, fishing and swimming can be enjoyed.

**Camping.** There are serviced commercial camps at Mallacoota, Genoa, Cann River and Bemm River. Basic camping facilities are provided by the National Parks Service at Wingen Inlet and at the Thurra River mouth. Booking is necessary for holiday periods. Bush camping is allowed in most parts of the Park but Park staff should be contacted in advance.

**Park Offices.** Princes Highway, Cann River; phone (051) 58 6351; Genoa Road, Mallacoota; phone (051) 58 0263.

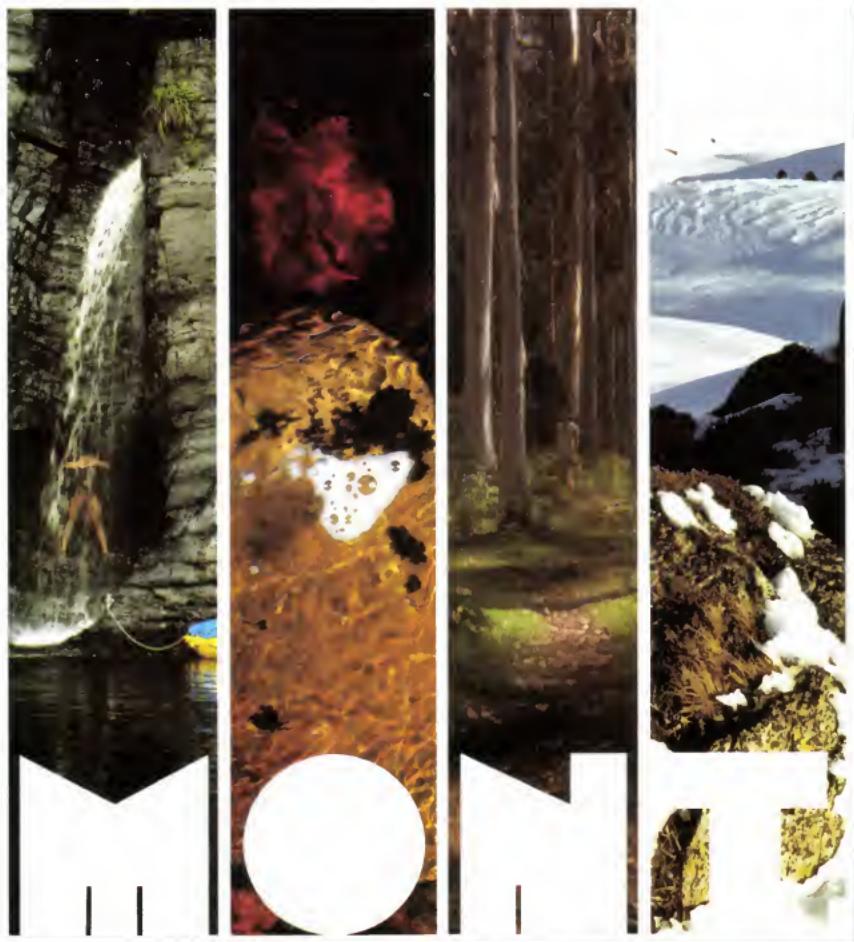
**Maps.** National Mapping sheets Eden, Mallacoota and Cann (all 1:100,000) cover the Park. Algoa Guides' Croajingolong National Park

and Approaches (1:125,000) covers the whole Park on one double-sided sheet with notes.

The National Parks Service produces Parknotes with basic information and a simple map on the reverse. ●



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# TrackNotes

## Mt Kosciusko's Main Range

The greatest ski touring in Australia; by local expert Steve Colman.



• FROM ALMOST ANYWHERE IN KOSCIUSKO National Park the high points of the Main Range stand out. Taking in Australia's highest peaks, the region encompasses our largest alpine environment. It extends from Dead Horse Gap near Thredbo to the divide at Consett Stephen Pass in the north. Although relatively small in skiable area, there is incredible diversity for virtually all levels of skiing ability. With the tree line at around 1,800 metres, these windswept, ancient mountains are a superb playground for more experienced cross country skiers.

**Snow camping.** The region has many fine areas for snow camping. For environmental reasons, camping within the catchment areas of the glacial lakes is discouraged. As the area is mainly above the tree line, stoves are essential. Extra fuel should be carried for melting snow, as running water is often hard to find.

Tents need to be of the highest quality to withstand the frequent, and very strong, winds. Make sure they are well anchored. In choosing tent sites try to find a sheltered spot to the leeward of rocks or snow banks. With the right

weather and snow conditions, snow caves and igloos are a pleasant alternative. But, as a general rule, always carry a tent for overnight trips.

**The season.** Even long after the ski lifts have closed, the Main Range often has good skiable snow. Huge accumulated snow drifts, like small perennial glaciers, linger in shady southern corners occasionally even through to the following winter. The start of the snow season is totally unpredictable other than to say you can normally ski by late June and occasionally even in late May.

Remember, though, that it often takes a couple of falls of snow to establish a solid base for skiing on. Otherwise you will be in amongst the shrubs and rocks... take your old skis!

Apart from the occasional, erratically brilliant days through winter (good snow, no wind and sunny skies), the best skiing begins in spring. As the snow consolidates, the sun's rays create the best spring snow conditions, allowing fast travelling and swooping downhill runs.

**Snow driving.** All access points except Thredbo require snow chains to be carried and

fitted if needed. This policy is policed!

**Books.** The only two books I know of that deal in detail with skiing in the Park are *Skii Touring in Australia* published by Alpina and *Snowy Mountains Walks* published by the Geehi Club.

**Maps.** The most useful sheets are Mount Kosciusko and Thredbo, both 1:50,000, published by the Central Mapping Authority. The NSW Ski Association's 1:25,000 *Thredbo Ski Touring Map* is an excellent large-scale map of the country between Thredbo and Mt Twynam.

**Huts.** The policy of Park administration has been to remove huts from the Main Range region. The only shelter hut still remaining is Seaman's Hut. Its facilities are very basic. It is not recommended for accommodation except in emergencies.

**Warning.** The Main Range often has extremely bad weather. It is essential that before venturing out you get an accurate up-to-date weather forecast. Leave details of your planned

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Skiing up beside Pounds Creek.

trip with the Rangers at Sawpit Creek, Smiggins Hole or Thredbo Ranger Stations. If weather conditions look unsettled, plan your tour below the tree line where you will have better perspective in white-out conditions.

#### Some recommended tours

**Leisurely day touring.** It's always pleasant to ski from the Thredbo top (chair lift) station across to the summit of Mt Kosciusko and back. Alternatively, ski to Charlottes Pass along the Crackenback Range.

**Active day touring.** Climb Mt Tate via Guthega Trig and Consett Stephen Pass, then Telemark down into Pounds Creek before crossing the Snowy and heading back to Guthega.

**Cross country downhill.** There's certainly no shortage of great runs, not to mention the amazing views, stretching to the white-capped peaks of the Victorian Alps. The western face of the Main Range provides the best potential. Runs off either side of Watsons Crags keep the adrenalin going. While out around the Sentinel you might contemplate moving on to ski mountaineering gear.

It's all country that will challenge the best of skiers. There are some interesting descriptions of runs in Algonia's guide to the area and in Elyne Mitchell's classic *Australia's Alps* the chapter 'Western Facing' is particularly interesting.

#### Skiing approaches

**General access.** Unless you are very fit and enjoy extremely long climbs (such as Hannels Spur), the accepted access points are from the Thredbo top station (reached by the chair lift), Guthega ski resort, Dead Horse Gap or



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Charlottes Pass village (reached by oversnow transport or skis from Perisher). Some of the better approaches are:

**Deadhorse Gap** has off-road parking. From the Gap climb through heavily timbered terrain before breaking out of the tree line near the Rams Heads. The descent to Dead Horse Gap is only for good skiers; alternatively, walk down.

**Thredbo**. Catch the chair lift to the top station (\$5.00 single ride) and follow the pole line to Rawsons Pass/Kosciusko. Note that the pole line branches one kilometre or so out from Thredbo. One line (right hand branch) heading to Seamans Hut.

**Guthega** offers two good alternatives:

- 1) From the dam, climb up the ridge and along to Consett Stephen Pass. In a good snow year stay low and go up Guthega Creek; a route for better skiers.
- 2) Follow the Snowy River up on its left side (facing upstream) to Illawong Lodge then cross at the suspension bridge. It is best to stay up, away from the river, and to contour slightly up and along. This route can be difficult skiing for beginners but is probably the quickest way into the Mt Twynam/Blue Lake area.

**Ski resorts**

**Thredbo** is expensive and very 'up market'. It is situated in a valley with chair lifts to the skiing areas. The best skiing access to the Main Range is from the top station of the chair lift.

**Perisher** is expensive and often crowded.

The major drawback is that there is no overnight parking. It is not recommended for access to the Main Range.

**Charlottes Pass** is snowed-in winter, when it is reached by ski or oversnow transport from Perisher (\$12 one way). Charlottes Pass gives good access once you are at the resort, but it is quite a long way to ski to this resort and then go touring on the Main Range. The road to the Pass is often open by the end of September.

**Guthega** is undergoing major promotion and development to attract more downhill skiers. It gives good access for better skiers. Overnight parking can be a hassle.

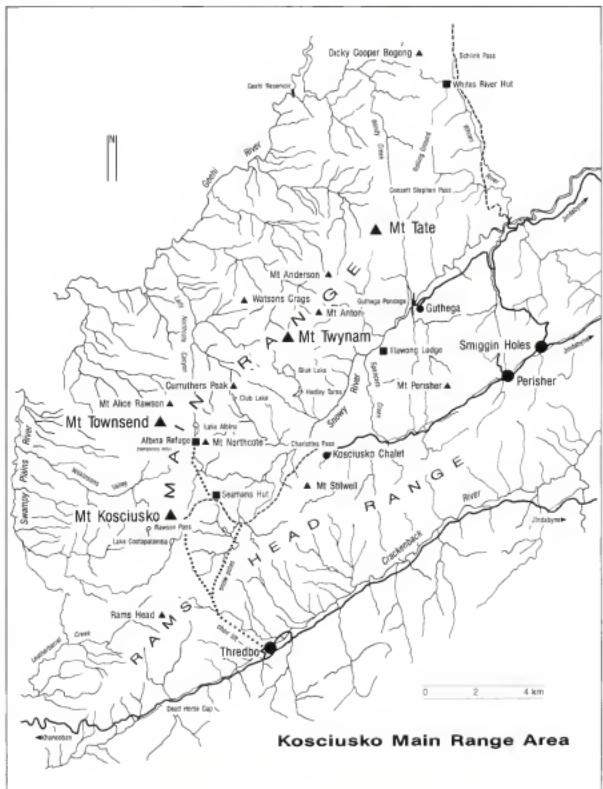
**Service towns**

**Jindabyne** is the closest major town to the Main Range. It is pretty 'touristy' and expensive. It has camping grounds and caravan parks.

**Cooma** is the major service centre for all the snowfields. It is well provided with transport and accommodation and is about an hour's drive from the resorts. It has camping grounds and caravan parks.

**The National Park**. Rest area camping is available in the Thredbo valley. For camping with facilities, Sawpit Creek on the Perisher Road is available. Tent fees are payable at Sawpit Creek. A rest area also is available on the Guthega Road at Island Bend.

All these areas are generally below the snow line and, apart from holiday times, space is not a problem. •





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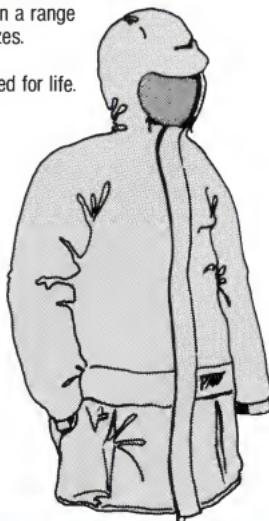
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# Reviews



**The Forests of East Gippsland** (Native Forests Action Council, 1983, RRP \$9.95).

Recent controversy concerning the Errinundra Plateau has brought the forests of East Gippsland into the limeight. These forests are beautiful, extensive — and valuable. The timber industry, a major economic factor in the region, has been making ever greater inroads into the forests. Sawmills need more timber, and loggers are being sent to clear more areas of native timber to get it.

A particular problem is the misuse of 'clearfelling'. This involves clearing and felling all trees and understorey in a given area. When the commercially valuable timber has been removed, the area is burned. This technique was developed to promote regeneration after harvesting mountain ash, but it has been extended to other forests because it makes extraction of timber simple and cheap.

Clearfelling causes immense damage. The regrowth may not include all species removed, and is unlikely to include the same proportion of species. Hollows in trees, necessary to support wildlife, are destroyed and will not be redeveloped until the forest is about 100 years old — and the timber industry will want to harvest again before then. Removal of all cover

causes erosion; the depleted soil muddies streams, killing aquatic organisms.

The forests of East Gippsland are being destroyed faster than they can grow. This book is mainly photographic and the high standard pictures give an insight into a diverse region. Glowing images depict rainforest, which requires 300-500 years of fire-free development to reach maturity, as well as the flora and fauna that inhabit it.

This is an attractive book with a message that must be heard: our native forests are finite and must be conserved.

Brian Walters

**Mammal Tracks and Signs** by Barbara Triggs (Oxford University Press, 1984, RRP \$12.99 paperback, \$25.99 hardback).

It may bring a blush to the cheek of *Wild* readers, but much of this book is concerned with animal droppings, or 'scats' as Barbara Triggs inoffensively terms them. The treatment is comprehensive, with colour illustrations and detailed descriptions.

But scats are only one aspect of this remarkable book which the author has compiled after several years' field experience. Of course there is considerable reward to be gained from

*The pristine Rooty Break Creek flowing through untouched rainforest. Photo by Erin Mainka, reproduced from *The Forests of East Gippsland*.*

an attitude of scientific detachment to scats: they not only indicate the species of animal which passed by but also when it did so, what it had been eating, the size of the animal and even, sometimes, its sex. The wombat leaves its cubic pellets in prominent places, and this may be a way of marking its territorial boundaries.

Barbara Triggs has lived on the edge of Gippsland's Mallacoota Inlet for many years so has had the opportunity to study fauna first hand. Her method is scientific but simply expressed, and the result is a field guide which caters for both professional and amateur naturalists.

The material is arranged for easy diagnosis of signs; there are four keys relating to tracks, scats, skulls and shelters. Coverage is comprehensive, including domestic animals as well as native mammals. The book, in fact, is a mine of information. For example, you may wish to know what kind of tracks are left by the thylacine (Tasmanian tiger). There are photographs of the feet and tracks, as well as a diagram setting out the main characteristics.

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Oxford University Press has produced a handsome volume, sufficiently compact for use in the bush. Information is clearly presented, with maps, diagrams and photographs at every stage. There has even been the foresight to include a centimetre scale along the side of the back cover.

One mystery remains unsolved: how is it that wombats leave scats that are cubic? BW

**Snowy Mountain Walks** (Geehi Bushwalking Club, sixth edition 1983, RRP \$6.75).

It is now about a quarter of a century since the first issue of this book was published. Successive editions have been in demand ever since.

**Snowy Mountain Walks** provides an introduction to the geology, flora and fauna, climate and history of Australia's highest mountains, as well as describing a series of walks. The sixth edition has updated track notes for the same walks as the previous edition, and these are largely representative of the region. Walks described range from easy day-walks to longer expeditions.

The new edition contains attractive photographs and has a more practical spiral binding. The black and white maps, though good, cram in a little too much detail and are hard to read quickly. Introducing some colour may be one way to improve this in future. This book has a lot to offer everyone who wants to walk in the 'Snowies'.

BW

**Cradle Mountain National Park** by John Chapman and John Siseman (Algoa Publications, revised edition 1984, RRP \$6.95).

The first edition of this guide established itself as the book to consult for proposed trips to the central Tasmanian highlands.

Little has had to be altered in this revision, the major addition being track notes for the walk from Frenchmans Cap to the Franklin River and on to the Victoria Pass.

As well as the Cradle Mountain National Park, the track notes also cover the Walls of Jerusalem, the Central Plateau and Frenchmans Cap National Park.

The reliable information is supported by good maps, photographs and advice.

BW

**South West Tasmania**, by John Chapman (Published by the author, second edition 1983, RRP \$7.95).

The first edition of this book of track notes developed something of the status of a sacred text. On a summer morning, at remote campsites throughout the region, hundreds of walkers would quietly consult the oracle before moving on. Not that it was devoid of errors, as the occasional annoyed walker would confirm, but it was comprehensive and well presented.

The new edition has greater coverage and removes many of the previous errors. One notable change is the elimination of the Old River route to Federation Peak. The track notes in the first edition were compiled while the bush was still thinned out after a bushfire. The scrub has now grown back to make the route the epic and worthless death march it was always reputed to be.

For Federation Peak itself Chapman now recommends a 50 metre rope, although he states a 20 metre length would be sufficient.

An interesting addition is the section describing the Franklin Range traverse. This is trackless country just west of the Huon-Serpentine impoundment (which flooded Lake Pedder). There is also a much fuller coverage

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of the South-west Cape area.

For those whose egos may have been dented by the first edition, estimated walking times have, in many cases, been extended in this edition.

The second edition of *South West Tasmania* promises to be just as much a classic as the first.

BW

**Bushcraft, Mountain Safety Manual 12** compiled by Bev Abbott and Wayne Mullins (New Zealand Mountain Safety Council, second edition 1983, RRP \$NZ5.00).

Tramping in New Zealand may call on knowledge you may not have gained from Australian walking.

This natty book tackles the subject of bushcraft from a New Zealand perspective. Australian readers will learn, for instance, a great deal from the lengthy section on river crossings — not usually much of a problem for them except in Tasmania. And there are tips on plants to avoid and conditions to beware of.

*Bushcraft* is well illustrated with diagrams and photographs, and covers the full gamut of bushcraft techniques.

BW

**The Shell Guide to the St James Walkway** by Philip Temple (Whitcoulls, 1984).

The latest in the well-known series of pocket guides to famous New Zealand walks, this excellent little book will be welcomed on both sides of the Tasman.

Of smaller format than its predecessors, the design of this guide has been significantly improved and its appeal greatly enhanced by the inclusion of a number of colour photos.

The Temple/Whitcoulls team is a tried and true one in this field. Their latest offering is unlikely to disappoint.

Chris Baxter

**Filming the Impossible** by Leo Dickinson (Jonathan Cape, 1982, RRP \$29.95).

Leo Dickinson enthralled audiences throughout Australia on his recent illustrated lecture tour. For those who missed it or want to relive the lecture, *Filming the Impossible* is essentially the lecture in book form.

Much of it is impressive stuff and will be of interest to many *Wild* readers, although the parachuting and ballooning chapters may not interest all of them. The book is well produced with generally excellent photographs and reads well. The chapter on Eric Jones' solo ascent of the North Face of the Eiger is particularly gripping.

CW

**The Kayaking Book** by Jay Evans (Stephen Green Press, 1983, RRP \$18.95).

Interest in kayaking, both as a competitive sport and family recreation, is growing each year. This soft-cover book, with plenty of photographs and diagrams, will fill an important gap in available literature.

Jay Evans is a former United States Olympic coach, and holds many firsts in the world of kayaking. He writes authoritatively on white water and flat water racing, slalom techniques and methods of training. His wide experience is evident in the many tips relating to competitive paddling which can also be made use of by the touring paddler.

This book isn't just for the experienced paddler. Basic equipment and basic techniques are covered, including a good section on the Eskimo roll. The advanced paddling techniques set you thinking. The sections on river reading, touring and surfing make good reading. Sea and

ocean kayaking are discussed, with useful information on navigation and rescue.

Evans has a 'useful information' section which includes a glossary of terms, bibliography, list of films, manufacturers and distributors of equipment, slalom racing rules, gate judging diagrams, schools, organizations and clubs. Unfortunately some of this information is of little relevance to the Australian reader.

Overall, *The Kayaking Book* is informative and inspiring, and every kayaker, from beginner to the more experienced, will get something new out of it.

Yvonne McLaughlin

**Upper Nymboida River Map** by Landjac Rivermaps (1984; available by mail order from 41 Eastfield Road, Croydon, Victoria 3136 for \$2.40).

The concept of a river map, showing access and egress points, rapids, campsites and similar details is excellent. However this map, while having several good points, contains some flaws which detract from its usefulness.

The gauge the authors have used to indicate minimum/maximum canoeing levels is read irregularly, meaning that, generally, river users won't know the river height before their arrival. This could result in a long drive for nothing! It would have been more useful if the authors had used the gauge at Jackaderry, which has a 24-hour telemetry device from which daily river readings are available.

Too many rapids have been named, resulting in the map looking very cluttered. I see no value in naming the smaller, grade two, rapids; this simply detracts from the impact in naming the bigger, more difficult rapids. The names given to rapids are those used by the commercial organizations who raft the river and not those used by the local New South Wales canoeists, so some confusion could arise.

The map is well drawn, with many campsites marked. Indications on which side of the river to portage are also given, and a number of access tracks are shown.

The map is a good size (280 x 430 millimetres) and on the reverse is some general information and detailed descriptions of the more difficult rapids. Unfortunately it is photocopied, which means that it is susceptible to fading in sunlight and with handling.

Overall, the map seems to have been done in a hurry, but it would certainly be useful for anyone contemplating canoeing or rafting the upper Nymboida. While the appropriate Natmap of the area is also necessary, it would certainly help river users in their preparations as well as during their time on the river.

YMC

**East Gippsland: Forests Forever Poster** by Erin Mainka (Native Forests Action Council, 1983, RRP \$4.50).

This substantial (1,000 x 680 millimetres) poster of native forest in East Gippsland is an outstanding photo, superbly reproduced at this size.

It is available from the NFAC, 285 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000 for \$5.00 including postage. Phone (03) 663 1561. CW

#### Other Titles Received

**Bushwackers Australian Song Book** (Anne O'Donovan, second edition 1983, RRP \$12.95).

**Mt Jagungal and the Brassy Mountains Map** by Tim Lamble (Published by the author, third edition 1983).

**The Shell Guide to The Milford Track** by Philip Temple (Whitcoulls, fifth edition 1984).

# Melbourne Map Centre

## 569 5472



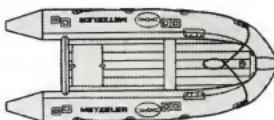
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- TASMAPS 1:100,000
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# Wild Gear Survey XC Skis

## Which Ski for Me?

Having tried cross country skiing, liked it and decided to purchase skis, a beginner, or any other skier for that matter, is faced with a formidable range from which to choose. How do you decide which ski will best suit your individual requirements?

Hopefully, this article will simplify that process. Despite vast volumes of kafuffle written about skis, the qualities to look for when selecting a pair are as unchanged as the day skis were invented. Grip, glide, turning, tracking (the ability of the ski to travel straight when required) and adequate strength are all major considerations, but their relative importance depends on you and your skiing. Apart from strength, ski flex (how it bends) is the most important factor affecting these considerations and is dealt with later in this article.

**Novices** should select a wider ski (over 48 millimetres wide at the middle) for flotation, a flexible tip (front) for confidence, a low to medium camber stiffness (force required to flatten the middle of the ski on to the snow) for easy grip and slower speed and, possibly, waisting (narrowing of the ski at its middle) for easier turning.

**Pack carriers** need wide skis (at least 50 millimetres at the middle), low to medium camber stiffness and medium to high torsional (twisting along the length of the ski) stiffness. Waistening is recommended and metal edges may be desirable to handle ice conditions.

**Cross country downhill (XCD) or Telemark** skiers specialize in perfecting their downhill technique. The steeper a slope and the faster they can ski the better they like it. Telemark skiers are conspicuous for either their graceful turns, their mammoth crashes, or both.

**Usage.** The first step is to be honest regarding your skiing ability and inclination, and decide what type of skiing you will do. Codes appearing in the accompanying table indicate the main usage recommended for a ski. (Bracketed letters indicate possible uses for suitably capable skiers.) If two categories are indicated, separated by a stroke, the ski is equally suitable for both categories.

**R:** Racing; usually weigh under 1,400 grams (a pair), rarely used out of tracks.

**T:** Training; usually weigh under 1,500 grams, generally used in tracks. Suitable for non-track tours, races and long, fast day touring by skilled skiers.

**L:** Light touring; used for day tours, may be suitable for light overnight tour. Waist usually between 46 and 52 millimetres.

**G:** General touring; waist from 49 to 54 millimetres, weight from 1,800 to 2,400 grams for day or multi-day tours and pack-carrying. May have metal edges.

**XCD:** Cross country downhill; waist from 52 to 62 millimetres, weight from 2,200 to 3,200 grams. All have steel edges and soft camber.

After determining the type of skier you are and the sort of skiing you prefer, consider the following ski features, noting those things that apply to you.

**Length.** To determine the correct ski length for you, stand the ski upright. The ski tip should

be level with the wrist of your upstretched hand. Deduct up to 20 centimetres if you are light, want to turn more easily or are simply not confident. A particularly heavily built person should add up to ten centimetres.

**Width** is generally measured in millimetres at the ski's tip, waist (or middle) and tail. A wider ski (at least 52 millimetres wide at the waist) is stronger and more suited to pack carrying. The larger surface area of a wider ski increases flotation and stability in deep snow. Since wider skis are usually easier to flatten out, beginners find them easier for uphill skiing. Narrower skis are designed for speed but are more difficult to control.

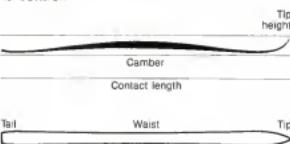


Figure 1 Ski anatomy

**Turning** is a factor of great importance in many skiers' minds and the principles are difficult to understand. As a guide, the less force required to press skis together base to base (that is, the less their camber stiffness), the easier they'll turn. Waisted skis (fig 1), being narrower at the waist than at the ends, are easier to turn than parallel-sided skis. It is essential that you discuss your turning requirements with an expert if you are to purchase correctly in this connection.

**Ski construction** is another subject confused by unnecessary mumbo-jumbo. It doesn't matter a brass razoo how your ski is made. Construction techniques are sufficiently developed to enable any type of construction to do the job you require. If, however, you are a real 'hoon' on skis and need the strongest possible construction then, as a rule of thumb, choose a torsion box. A wrapped torsion box has a fibreglass/resin mix wrapped round a wood or synthetic core. Polyurethane injected into a mould and allowed to set with a tough outer skin is described as an injected torsion box. Wood or foam pre-cut to shape then laminated between sheets is described as a sandwich.

**Base.** There are four major types of base. Unless you know what you are doing, leave waxing to experts so you can concentrate on skiing. Pattern bases allow forward glide, and bite into the snow to prevent you slipping backward. Positive patterns protrude out of the base and provide easy grip but slower forward glide. Negative patterns, being cut into the base, permit faster gliding but require improved technique to obtain grip. Non-wax micro bases are smooth and generally very fast. For grip they rely on adhesion between the snow and the base material itself. The properties of some micro bases even alter with snow temperature. They require moderate technique and, occasionally, special preparation.

**Base material.** Hardness is the only important difference between different ski base materials. A harder base will last longer, but may chip if not used carefully. Milled base patterns (negative steps) generally indicate tough material. Micro bases can be relatively soft. No ski, however, is made to withstand impact from rocks, trees or gravel and you should expect manufacturers' warranties to be void under these circumstances of misuse.

**Metal edges.** These are useful on pack-carrying tours for reducing side slippage on ice, particularly on downhills. They are becoming increasingly popular with more experienced skiers although they are insufficiently flexible to permit the development of a good diagonal stride. Novices are still advised against buying offset (protruding beyond ski sides) steel edge models — unless you can ski in control, edges can do cutting damage to skis, boots, clothing and even people.

**Camber stiffness.** This refers to a ski's resistance to being flattened in the middle (fig 2). Comparative tests are made on skis of the same length, as camber stiffness varies not only

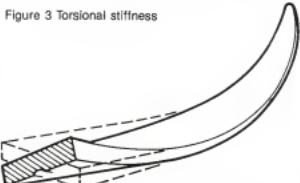


Figure 2 Camber stiffness

between types of skis but also lengths of skis. For example, a short ski will have less camber stiffness than a long ski of the same type. We have used a scale of five to describe camber stiffness. The softer the camber (the smaller the number) the better the ski's turning ability and grip, but the slower its glide. These characteristics may well be desirable for a beginner needing to develop basic skills and confidence. Stiffer skis (higher numbers) will glide more rapidly, but require improved technique and are more difficult to turn. It should be noted that micro base ski function with little camber stiffness.

**Torsional stiffness.** This is the resistance of the ski to twisting. Figure 3 indicates the type of twisting. Generally, a torsionally stiff ski is easier to turn, especially on ice, but it will be

Figure 3 Torsional stiffness



less forgiving because the inflexible tip will transmit terrain variances through the ski to the skier. Flexible tips are desirable on lightweight skis used primarily in tracks because they readily conform to track direction by minimizing resistance between the tip of the ski and the

track walls. A softer tip touring ski is easier to learn on in Australia's compact snow. Our torsion measurements were made by clamping each ski at its balance point, and measuring the force required to twist the tip (at its widest point)

by 18°. Again we have used a scale of five to describe torsional stiffness; the higher the number, the more torsionally stiff the ski.

**Cosmetics.** Believe it or not, colour may affect ski performance, but temperatures in

Australia are not cold enough to make any significant difference. Everything else being equal, you may as well select cosmetics to match your flashy ski suit! •

*Philip Coleman*

	Usage	Width (mm)	Weight	Construction	Base	Metal edges	Camber stiffness	Torsional stiffness	RR Price
<b>Asnes Norway</b>									
Tur Langren	LT	58-50-54	2,190 g	Laminated wood	Wax	3	2	\$98	
49E	LT(GT)	56-49-52	1,715	Sandwich, wood core	Neg step or wax	3	2	\$93	
54E	GT(LT)	63-54-57	1,890	Sandwich, wood core	Neg step or wax	4	3	\$102	
Telemark MT 54	XCD(GT)	63-54-57	2,285	Sandwich, wood core	Neg step or wax	Steel	3	3	\$183
Honeyedge	GT(XCD	72-62-67	2,095	Sandwich, alum h'comb	Wax	Steel	3	4	\$298
<b>Atomic Austria</b>									
Touring Microstep 15	LT(GT)	49-49-49	1,810	Sandwich, foam core	Micro or wax	2	2	\$95	
Leader Microstep 60	GT(XCD	62-51-58	2,285	Sandwich, foam core	Micro or wax	Steel	1	5	\$165
Telemark	XCD	72-61-67	2,665	Sandwich, foam core	Wax	Steel	1	4	\$180
<b>Blizzard Austria</b>									
Quattro Light	LT(T)	44-44-44	1,580	Sandwich, foam core	Pos step or wax	na	na	\$149	
Quattro Sport	LT	47-47-47	1,715	Sandwich, foam core	Pos step or wax	na	na	\$99	
Quattro Touring	LT(GT	na-50-na	1,855	Sandwich, foam core	Pos step or wax	na	na	\$94	
<b>Dynastar France</b>									
Pro Lite	T	45-45-45	1,380	Sandwich, foam core	Pos step or wax	na	2	\$140	
Evasion PVS	LT	47-47-47	1,525	Sandwich, foam core	Pos step	2	2	\$110	
Fjord PVS	LT(GT)	49-49-49	1,925	Sandwich, foam core	Pos step or wax	4	2	\$89	
Montagne	GT(XCD	64-54-58	2,475	Sandwich, foam core	Pos step or wax	Steel	1	3	\$150
<b>Epoque Norway</b>									
900	LT(GT)	55-47-51	1,715	Wrapped tb, wood core	Posstep,micro,mohair or wax	4	2	\$144	
1,000	GT	61-52-56	1,905	Wrapped tb, wood core	Posstep,micro,mohair or wax	4	3	\$149	
<b>Fisher Austria</b>									
Super Crown S	LT	49-49-49	1,430	Sandwich, foam core	Neg step	5	2	\$185	
Nordic Crown	LT	51-45-49	1,665	Sandwich, wood core	Neg step or wax	4	2	\$150	
Europa Crown	LT(GT)	51-49-50	1,715	Sandwich, wood core	Neg step	5	1	\$135	
Fibre Crown	LT(GT)	51-49-50	1,810	Sandwich, wood core	Neg step or wax	5	1	\$101	
Touring Crown	LT(GT	59-50-54	1,905	Sandwich, wood core	Neg step	5	2	\$165	
Comfort Crown	GT	59-54-57	2,095	Sandwich, wood core	Neg step	4	2	\$120	
Europa 99 Crown	GT	65-55-61	2,145	Sandwich, wood core	Neg step or wax	Steel	4	3	\$220
Expedition	GT	78-62-69	2,620	Sandwich, wood core	Wax	Alum	1	5	\$210
America 109 ST	XCD	65-55-61	2,570	Sandwich, wood core	Wax	Steel	1	5	\$210
<b>Hagan West Germany</b>									
Lech	LT	50-50-50	1,560	Sandwich, foam core	Neg step	3	2	\$68	
Zurs	LT(GT)	50-50-50	1,695	Sandwich, foam core	Pos step or wax	3	2	\$84	
<b>Jarvinen Finland</b>									
Speed 48	TILT	48-48-48	1,400	Sandwich, wood core	Neg step or wax	na	na	\$104	
Glass GT Freewax	LT(GT	50-50-50	1,700	Sandwich, wood core	Micro or wax	na	na	\$108	
Touring 58	GT(LT)	58-49-54	na	Sandwich, wood core	Neg step or wax	na	na	\$104	

R Racing, T Training, LT Light touring, GT General touring, XCD Cross country downhill, Alum Aluminium, Neg Negative, Pos Positive, tb torsion box, na not available. Camber stiffness and torsional stiffness are given only as a guide. Because they are relative measurements only, units have not been specified for either. The higher the number, the stiffer the ski. Width is measured in millimetres at the tip, waist and tail. Weight is in grams for a 200 centimetre pair of skis. Prices are for the first-named base option.

		Usage	Width (mm)	Weight	Construction	Base	Metal edges	Camber stiffness	Torsional stiffness	RR Price
<b>Karhu</b>	Finland/Canada									
Racer 44		T(R,LT)	44-44-44	1,300	Sandwich, foam core	Wax	4	1	\$194	
46 Multigrade		LT	46-46-46	1,400	Sandwich, foam core	Micro or wax	4	2	\$153	
46 Bearclaw		LT	46-46-46	1,600	Sandwich, foam core	Neg step or wax	3	2	\$120	
52		LT/GT	52-52-52	1,700	Sandwich, foam core	Micro, neg step or wax	4	2	\$145	
Country		LT/GT	52-52-52	2,095	Sandwich, foam core	Neg step or wax	4	3	\$80	
Kodiak		GT	60-52-57	1,660	Sandwich, foam core	Micro, neg step or wax	3	4	\$159	
XCD		GTXCD	62-54-59	2,240	Sandwich, foam core	Micro, neg step or wax	Steel	3	4	\$190
XCD Comp		XCD	62-54-59	2,240	Sandwich, foam core	Wax	Steel	1	4	\$190
<b>Kastle</b>	Austria									
Lite Trend		LT	50-48-49	1,300	Sandwich, wood core	Neg step or wax	4	2	\$110	
Lite Touring		LT(GT)	51-50-49	1,620	Sandwich, wood core	Neg step or wax	4	2	\$99	
Telemark		XCD	66-55-58	2,240	Sandwich, wood core	Wax	Steel	3	2	\$169
<b>Kazama</b>	Japan									
Mountain Air		XCD/GT	62-54-57	2,720	Sandwich, wood core	Neg step	Steel	na	na	\$202
Mountain High		XCD/GT	62-54-57	2,760	Sandwich, wood core	Wax	Steel	na	na	\$202
Telemark Comp		XCD	67-58-64	2,990	Sandwich, wood core	Wax	Steel	na	na	\$220
<b>Kneissl</b>	Austria									
Red Star HC		LT	48-48-48	1,600	Sandwich, foam core	Neg step or wax	5	1	\$139	
Blue Star HC		LT(GT)	52-48-50	1,580	Sandwich, foam core	Neg step or wax	4	2	\$115	
Touring HC		LT/GT	56-50-52	1,680	Sandwich, foam core	Neg step or wax	4	2	\$110	
White Star AF		XCD	61-51-53	2,350	Sandwich, foam core	Wax	Steel	1	4	\$210
<b>Kuusisto</b>	Finland									
Neverwax 480		LT(T)	48-48-48	1,475	Sandwich, wood core	Micro or wax	3	2	\$119	
Neverwax 520		LT(GT)	52-52-52	1,620	Sandwich, wood core	Micro or wax	2	2	\$127	
Neverwax 680		GT	68-68-68	1,900	Sandwich, wood core	Micro or wax	2	2	\$164	
<b>Lansdem</b>	Norway									
Competition 62		T(LT)	44-44-44	1,380	Sandwich, wood core	Micro or wax	4	1	\$141	
Touring 65		LT(GT)	55-49-52	1,665	Sandwich, wood core	Pos step, micro or wax	3	2	\$122	
Tourist 67		LT(GT)	55-49-52	1,620	Sandwich, wood core	Pos step, micro or wax	3	2	\$103	
<b>Pilz</b>	West Germany									
Snowrunner		GT	54-54-54	2,095	Sandwich, foam core	Neg step	Alum	2	4	\$119
<b>Rossignol</b>	France									
Vercors AR		T(LT)	45-45-45	1,695	Sandwich, foam core	Pos step or wax	3	2	\$98	
Saga AR		LT(T)	49-47-49	1,753	Sandwich, foam core	Pos step or wax	3	2	\$119	
Oural AR		LT	49-47-49	1,775	Sandwich, foam core	Pos step or wax	4	1	\$89	
Chamois AR		GT/XCD	64-55-58	2,475	Sandwich, foam core	Pos step or wax	Steel	1	3	\$150
<b>Skilom</b>	Norway									
141		LT	52-48-50	1,525	Injected tb, foam core	Pos step or wax	na	na	\$119	
139		GT(LT)	60-52-56	1,760	Injected tb, foam core	Micro or wax	na	na	\$135	
<b>Spalding</b>	Italy									
Competition		T	44-44-44	1,300	Sandwich, foam core	Wax	na	2	\$137	
Polar		LT(GT)	49-49-49	2,000	Sandwich, foam core	Neg step	na	2	\$79	
<b>Trak</b>	West Germany									
Racing CS		T(LT)	45-45-45	1,335	Sandwich, foam core	Pos step	5	2	\$172	
Marathon AS		LT(T)	48-48-48	1,525	Sandwich, wood core	Pos step	5	2	\$150	
Sprint		LT(T)	48-48-48	1,715	Sandwich, foam core	Pos step	3	3	\$137	
Cortina		LT(GT)	52-47-49	1,715	Sandwich, foam core	Pos step	2	3	\$122	
Seefeld		LT/GT	55-50-52	1,810	Sandwich, foam core	Pos step	3	2	\$114	
Nordic Tour		GT(LT)	55-55-52	2,095	Sandwich, foam core	Pos step	Steel	3	4	\$166
Touring 2,000		GT	65-65-65	2,190	Sandwich, foam core	Pos step	Alum	4	5	\$166
Telemark		XCD	61-52-55	2,285	Sandwich, foam core	Pos step	Steel	2	4	\$199
<b>Volkl</b>	West Germany									
Speed Microschuppe		LT(T)	49-45-46	1,830	Sandwich, foam core	Micro or wax	na	3	\$164	
Touring Microschuppe		GT(LT)	53-49-51	1,620	Sandwich, foam core	Micro or wax	na	3	\$149	
Jogging Cross		GT/XCD	64-56-60	2,320	Sandwich, wood core	Micro or wax	Steel	na	3	\$239

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# GORE-TEX® FABRIC DOWN UNDER

## GORE-TEX® A Brief History

GORE-TEX® Fabric was introduced in the northern hemisphere in 1976 through qualified manufacturers of garments, tents and sleeping bags. Developed through advanced technology, GORE-TEX® Fabric is still the most breathable, completely water-proof and wind-proof fabric in existence.

By late 1978, through the combined efforts of manufacturers and consumers plus extensive research and development, GORE-TEX® Fabric was modified substantially to become an "easy care" product. Care and washing instructions were simplified dramatically.

1980 saw a further advance with a breakthrough in seam sealing technology. The GORE Seam Sealing Machine allows seams to be permanently and effectively sealed at the time the product is manufactured.

Progress has continued and new laminating techniques now permit GORE-TEX® Fabric to be used in a variety of new applications including running shoes, hiking boots, fashion footwear, X-C ski boots and ski gloves.

GORE-TEX® Fabric is simply the most functional fabric on the market at this time for all-weather protection and comfort.

## GORE-TEX® Fabric Arrives "Down Under."

In 1979 Mountain Designs and Paddymade, two of the leading manufacturers of outdoor gear in Australia, made their first garments from "easy care" GORE-TEX® Fabric. These parkas and overtrousers have been tried and proven in all weather conditions in Australia, New Zealand and overseas.

In 1980 Macpac Products of Christchurch introduced GORE-TEX® Fabric into the New Zealand market with the "Light Year" lightweight tunnel tent. This was soon followed with clothing accessories in

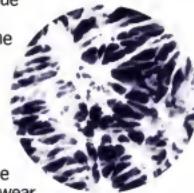
GORE-TEX® Fabrics by Alp Sports and Wilderness Products.

Many other progressive manufacturers of quality gear and garments for outdoor pursuits now incorporate GORE-TEX® Fabric in their ranges as the premium performance product.

Some of these Australian and New Zealand products made in GORE-TEX® Fabrics are illustrated and reader enquiries directed to the manufacturers will be welcomed and given prompt attention.

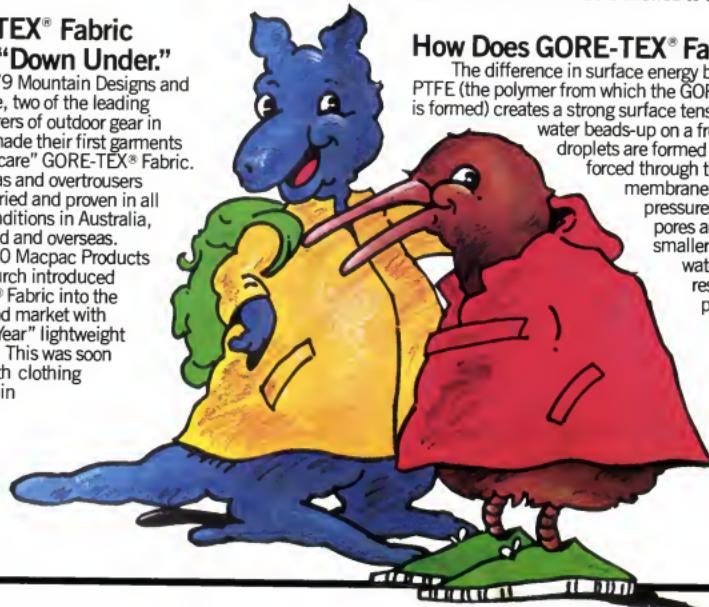
## What is GORE-TEX® Fabric?

It is a combination of the unique GORE-TEX® membrane and woven and knit outerwear fabrics. While the shell and liner fabrics provide strength and durability, the key to performance is the GORE-TEX® membrane which is microporous, yet hydrophobic (water-proof). The result of this combination is water-proof, wind-proof, and durable garments which are comfortable to wear because moisture inside is allowed to evaporate and escape.



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# Equipment

• **Packs.** **Fairydown**, as part of its revitalized approach, is manufacturing a range of packs. Five models are available including a travel pack and external-frame model, but of most interest to bushwalkers are the **Terra Nova** and the **Breaking Ice**. Both are large, single-compartment models with a lid pocket. The Terra Nova (RRP \$149) has a Lowe-type harness system which can be adjusted to fit different back lengths. Its 60 litre volume can be expanded to 80 litres by extending the top lid. The Breaking Ice comes in three fixed back lengths. Prices range from \$134 to \$141 for the



Fairydown Breaking Ice and, right, the Berghaus Mustang.

different sizes. Volume varies from 55 litres for the small size to 65 litres for the large. Its internal frame is easily removed for custom fitting. Of interest to short people, the small model is recommended for those of up to 160 centimetres in height. Made from either canvas or Cordulon, these packs are generally durable, thoughtfully designed and sell for a reasonable price.

Australians are well known for having the travel bug. Travel packs are therefore very popular. **Berghaus** is getting in on the act with its recently released **Mustang** series. Four packs range from a smallish 25 litre model (RRP \$58) up to the large A65 (65 litre, RRP \$177). The A50 is specifically designed for women and, like the A65, features the AB carrying system



(as reported in *Wild* no 10). All models are styled in navy and silver with a reflective band across the front.

Since reporting the release of the **Karrimor Condor** range of adjustable back length packs in *Wild* no 12, we had an opportunity to test one. We tested the Condor 75 (litre) on medium to long back lengths. While the pack was found to be generally comfortable, even when loaded for a six-day walk, we have some reservations.

The major problem lies with the adjustable hip belt. The foam padding of the hip fins is backed with semi-rigid polypropylene sheeting with a number of holes punched into it. A plastic 'nut and bolt' clip is used to hold this sheeting in one of a variety of lengths to a similar piece of sheeting attached behind the lumbar pad. Unfortunately the clips may pull through the sheeting when under stress. (This can happen even when the hip stabilizer straps are tensioned.) Also, it is claimed that this system allows for the hip belt to be angled up or down. We found that this could not be done.

The KS 1000 fabric is very good, and Karrimor guarantees it for life. However the single stitching on some major seams may be inadequate. The straps running underneath the pack are exposed to abrasion. We noticed some slipping of tape through buckles.

As bushwalking in Australia is hard on gear, particularly rucksacks, we would encourage manufacturers to make equipment robust. A recent trend towards gimmickry, with more seams, zips, buckles and tapes, reduces the durability of the product. The extra seams and zips are extra points of leakage and breakage. Extra straps and buckles get caught on scrub. While comfort is an excellent objective, we believe that this can be achieved with a lot more simplicity of design.

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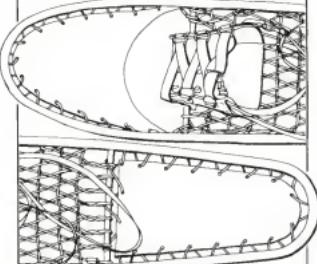


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• **No Sweat.** Fabrics that breathe and are waterproof at the same time are a rare commodity. **Peter Storm** is producing one called 'No Sweat'. The fabric is polyurethane, lined with knitted polyamide. Fine hair-line cracks allow water vapour to escape but are not big enough to permit water penetration. We tested a yachting jacket (RRP \$98) made from this fabric during an Easter bushwalk.

The first two noticeable properties of the jacket were its smell and the elasticity of the fabric. Fortunately the rubbery smell disappeared after a couple of days. The elasticity made it very comfortable to wear. All seams are welded, permitting no leakage.

Three days of rain and one of snow provided ideal testing conditions. The jacket performed well with no noticeable leakage or condensation build-up. In other words, I stayed dry.

Unfortunately, what the jacket gained from the fabric it lost through poor design. The hood was inadequate, the sleeves uncomfortable and it was cut too short. Velcro tabs on the sleeves kept getting caught in the Velcro beside the zip, and the zip kept getting caught in its double protection flaps.

Peter Storm tells us that a longer-cut jacket designed for walking will be available soon. We suggest that you wait till then.

• **Light Feet.** There are many **boot** manufacturers in northern Italy. One which has made quite an impact in Britain recently is **Zamberlan**. Three models from the Zamberlan Lite series are being imported by **Skima Imports Australia**.

Using a new Vibram sole and Cordura and suede uppers, the **Sport Lite** and **Trail Lite** each weigh 1.1 kilograms for a pair of size 41s.

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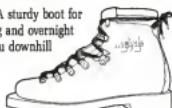
## Backcountry Boots!

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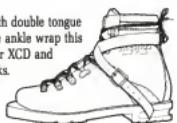
Both boots incorporate a Vibram sole, torsion plate and Norwegian welt for control and durability. Uppers are top grain leather with thermal padding and soft leather lining.

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Zamberlan Sport Lite

The **Trek Lite** differs in that it has a full leather upper and weighs only one kilogram. Prices vary from \$120 to \$150 depending on the model.

• **Brain Space. Climbing helmets** are a little out of fashion these days, mainly because they are hot and uncomfortable to wear. But ever since John Muir, the Australian climber, was hit on the head by a sardine tin while soloing the North Face of the Matterhorn, it has been clear that more people should be wearing them.

**Karrimor Australia** is importing a European helmet, the **Edeleid Durace** (RRP approximately \$42). It weighs only 465 grams and has holes to let out some of that hot air we all know climbers produce. One size does not fit all, as we discovered when trying it on several heads at the *Wild* office, but it will fit the majority of



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climbers. The Durace comes in orange or white. Current **Edelrid catalogues** are available from Karrimor Australia for \$1 each.

• **Electronic Altimeter.** Orienting Service of Australia is importing a German electronic altimeter/barometer, the *Alpin 5000*. The readings are accurate to ten metres or one



millibar of atmospheric pressure in a temperature range of —20° to 60° C. Altitude readings are from —500 metres to +5,000 metres, so it won't be much use on Everest but there will be no problems on Kosciusko. RRP \$138.

• **More From the USA.** There is no shortage of expensive foreign tents being brought into this country. A new brand to appear recently is **Trailwise** from the USA, imported by **Mt Waverley Ski & Hire**. The **Great Arc Dome**, the flagship of Trailwise, sells for \$500. It is a stretched hexagon in shape, with the occupants lying in the direction of stretch. Its six aluminium hoops are of three different lengths, creating problems of knowing which sleeve to put which pole into. Total weight, 3.5 kilograms. Mt Waverley Ski & Hire is also bringing in a range of **Trailwise packs and clothing**.

• **Ice Screw Tests.** The following is an abbreviated translation of a report of the German Alpine Club's Safety Committee that appeared in that Club's newsletter (*Mitteilungen* no 4) in 1983.

Ice screws and pitons: how strong are they? How should they be placed?

It has previously been thought that about 120° to 135° from the downhill slope is the ideal placement angle. Tests showed, however, that 90°, that is at right angles to the ice surface, is strongest. But if you misjudge the angle and go below that, holding strength goes down considerably, so the Safety Committee recommends using about 100°, that is 90° plus a smidgin (but not as much as 120° — get a protractor and get the idea).

Strength tests (300 screwpitons were tested to destruction) showed all to be acceptable except the 15 centimetre **Lowe Snerg** (the 23 centimetre one is good) and the 23 centimetre **Camp tube**. Furthermore, all spiral-toothed, conical and half-tubular ice pitons were no good. **Chouinard tubular** screws were the best, together with a Soviet titanium tube, which can't be bought.

Dieter Britz

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# Wildfire

## Landscape Lunacy

On a recent climbing trip to Mt Boyce in the Blue Mountains I received a terrible shock. One used to approach the cliff by following a narrow, winding track through the bush along the top of the cliff to the descent gully, but not any more.

Some person or persons (if they deserve that title) have built a more direct path. This might have been acceptable if it were not for the appalling manner of its construction. The path is much wider than necessary, and no attempt was made to avoid trees — they had been hacked down and back. Drainage has not been considered; there is nothing to retain the soil now that the plant cover has been removed, and the surface has been carefully raked clear of all organic matter.

That is not all. On reaching the cliffs one finds that those responsible for this misguided activity found it necessary to remove all vegetation, including sizeable trees, within eight metres from the top of the cliff, and then disposed of the rubbish by throwing it over the edge. The crowning horrors are the vile little exotic perennials carefully planted along the path.

Who is responsible for this 'reconstruction'? If anyone knows please make it publicly known, and join me in pronouncing them . . . (expletive deleted! Editor) until they have remedied the situation and promised to be more thoughtful in future.

Who is responsible for this 'reconstruction'?

If anyone knows please make it publicly known,

and join me in pronouncing them . . . (expletive deleted! Editor)

until they have remedied the situation and promised to be more thoughtful in future.

Elizabeth Dudley  
Randwick, NSW

**Fire**  
One of the most noticeable pieces of evidence of increased walking in National Parks and wilderness areas is the abundance of fireplaces — and their remains. On a recent trip to the Kowmung River in the Blue Mountains there were the remains of an enormous camp fire and wood pile — right in the middle of the only campsite for several kilometres. Common sense dictates that if you are beside a river it is best to have your fire on rock or sand so that fire ashes can be easily destroyed or buried.

The 'bash and burn' habit of disposing of tins seems to be reappearing. In the last six months every fireplace I have come across has had either foil or tins left in it. Contrary to popular misconception, foil does not fully decompose when burnt. Tins simply change colour and shape.

With so few natural, unspoiled areas remaining, it would seem to be in the users' self-interest to bring out their rubbish, so that human use of this precious resource is not the final destroyer of wilderness.

Jennie Whinam  
Hackett, ACT

Readers' letters are welcome. A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be published. Write to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 413, Prahran, Victoria, 3181.

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**Worldwide Mountaineering Literature** bought and sold. Books, journals, reports etc always wanted. List of items for sale available now. Paul Hudson, 88 Ash Road, Leeds, LS6 3HD, Yorkshire, England.

## Club News

20 cents a word (minimum \$3.00) for the first 50 words, then 50 cents a word, prepaid. Send notice and payment to Wild Publications Pty Ltd, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

**Bankstown Bushwalking & Social Club** has something for every wilderness lover; bushwalking, abseiling, canyoning, caving, skiing, canoeing, horse-riding and socials. For a wholistic experience, contact secretary Paul Obochov (02) 705 5292 (home), (02) 516 0494 (work) or PO Box 401, Bankstown, NSW 2200.

**Melbourne Nordic Ski Club.** Ski teaching, training, racing, touring, snow camps, social. All resorts and wilderness. Monthly meetings in Camberwell. Beginners! New members welcome. Further details from Secretary, 241 7386 ah.

### OXOI

Melbourne University Mountaineering Club is celebrating its fortieth anniversary this year. A dinner is being held on 29 September; other activities are planned throughout the year. All ex-members especially welcome. Further details: Janet Rice, (03) 347 3394.

**QEMCOG** for abseiling, ballooning, canoeing, caving, cycling, FWDriving, gliding, hang gliding, hiking, horse-riding, parachuting, windsurfing etc. Geographical and naturalist excursions. Three trips monthly. Monthly meetings. Pauline (09) 381 5948, Deanne (09) 386 6431. PO Nedlands, WA 6009.

**The Victorian Climbing Club** meets at 8 pm on the last Thursday of each month (except December); and second last Thursday in September) at 188 Gatehouse Street, Parkville 3052. Visitors and new members interested in rockclimbing are welcome. Contact the Secretary, PO Box 1725P, Melbourne, Victoria 3001.

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